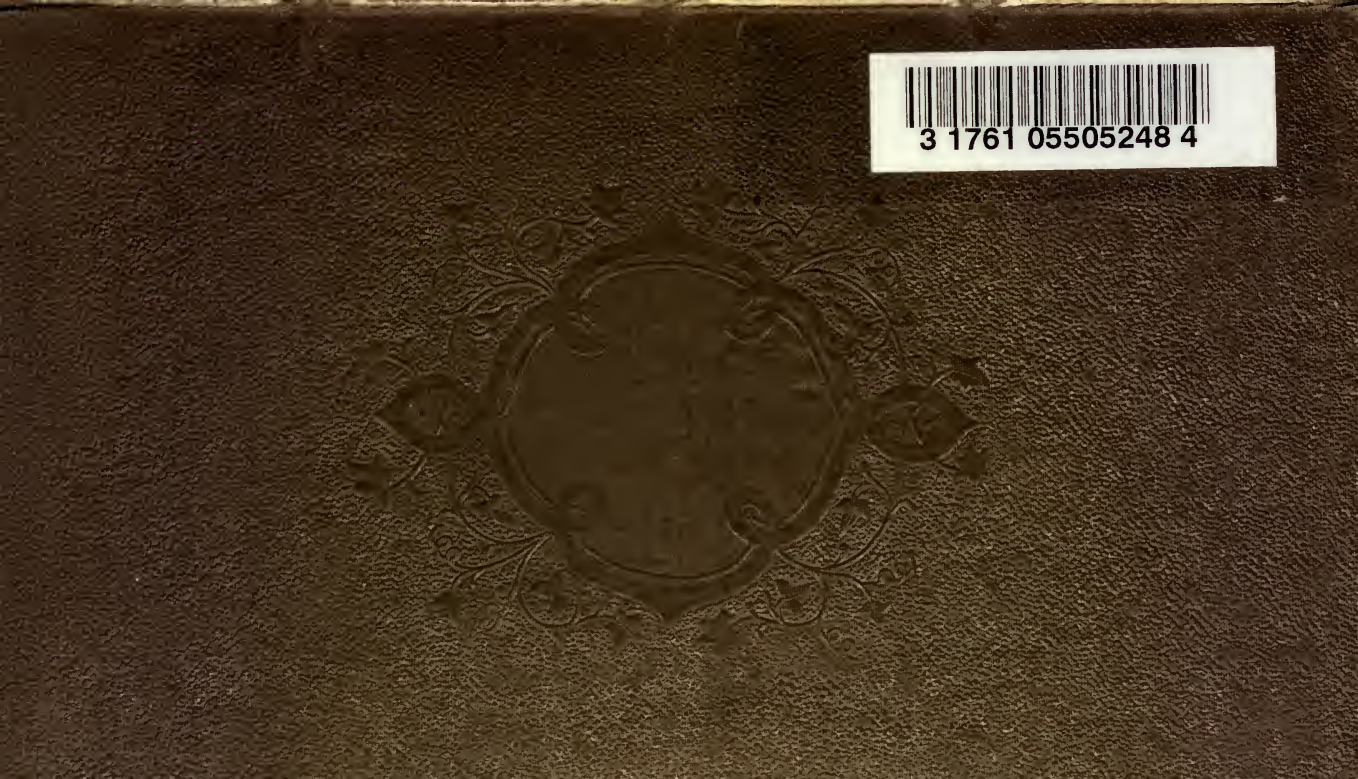
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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

JOURNAL, &c.

OF THE LATE

MARGARET WOODS,

FROM THE YEAR 1771 TO 1821.

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."—Job, xiv. 14.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

The Manuscript, from which the following pages are extracted, was bequeathed by the writer to her daughter and grand-daughters, with views which may be best explained in her own words; "Not that I consider them as containing any thing new, or particularly valuable, but because I think the remarks made by one for whom we retain an affectionate remembrance, are often more attended to, than those of persons to whom we are indifferent."

Those who have received consolation and encouragement from the perusal of this Manuscript, believe that their estimate of its value is not derived *solely* from their own feelings of love and respect for the Author,

and hope that its usefulness may be extended to a wider circle by the present publication. It is scarcely necessary to add, that in preparing this for the press, a few merely verbal alterations have been admitted.

Margaret Woods, a member of the Society of Friends, was the eldest daughter of Samuel* and Grizell Hoare, many years resident at Stoke Newington, near London. She was born in 1748, and was married to Joseph Woods in the spring of 1769. They at first settled in London, but after two or three years removed to Stoke Newington; and she continued to reside in that village, till her seventy-fourth year, when she peacefully departed this life on the fifth of the seventh month, 1821, little more than a week after writing the last paragraph in the Journal.

* Son of Joseph and Margaret Hoare, of Cork.

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE JOURNAL,

&c.

1771.

"SET thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."* It is a necessary engagement of mind frequently to look forward beyond the limits of this world, and ponder in our hearts whether we are fit to receive this awful message, "Thou shalt die and not live." However lightly we may treat these matters in the days of health and strength, yet the time will inevitably arrive, when we shall see the importance of them, and consider the gain of the whole world as nothing in comparison of our own souls.

When the prospect of the grave seems to

* II Kings, xx. 1. Isaiah, xxxviii. 1.

open before us, the scene closing upon us in which we must bid adieu to all this world can afford, we are necessarily driven to the thought of what may be hereafter, and what account we shall be able to give before the Judge of the whole earth. Happy are we if we can appeal to God as did Hezekiah, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight."* If our consciences condemn us not, then shall we have confidence towards God, and rest assured that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, and the message is sent, which informs us that we must die and not live, we shall have a habitation in the heavens, a crown of glory, that will never be taken away.

"Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth:"† This solemn call seems to fill the mind with a peculiar awe, and prepare it for attention to the most important truths. The same call is yet extended to us, in this generation. Be instructed, O my people, is the voice of the Father of Mercies. To hear the words of instruction, we must withdraw from the alluring pleasures of a sinful world, come out

* Isaiah, xxxviii. 3. † Isaiah, i. 2.

of Babylon, and partake not of her idolatries; for though the visitation of the Most High is extended to all mankind, that all may repent and live; yet the first command is, "Cease to do evil,"* and then shall we be instructed how "to do well." In the hour of cool meditation, how frequently do we hear the soft whisper of conscience, not only condemning the evil, and leading us to repentance, but pointing out to us the way by which we may arrive at happiness and glory. Inward retirement helps to show us ourselves; the weakness and poverty of our situation, and the necessity of receiving strength and consolation from Him, who can remove all difficulties, and is "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."† How earnest, then, should be our endeavours to make God our friend! How necessary is it for us to retire inward, that we may hear and receive with deep attention the voice of instruction, knowing that it is only by obedience that we can inherit the promise. But let us not deceive ourselves with vain imaginations, and think that a form of godliness will serve, without the power.

"My son, give me thine heart,"‡ is the call to each individual. It is not a partial

* Isaiah, i. 16, 17. † Isaiah, xxxii. 2. ‡ Prov. xxiii. 26.

obedience with respect to moral rectitude, that will do for us; but the obedience that is by faith: for without faith no man can please God. If we would be heirs of the kingdom, we must be disciples of Christ. Self-righteousness must be brought low. All pride must be laid in the dust, all high-mindedness be done away. We must learn meekness and humility of heart, and sit as at the footstool of Jesus, waiting for the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth.

O Father of all creatures, Author and Creator of all good, condescend, I beseech thee, in thy never-failing mercy, to instruct us, who are the workmanship of thy hands, how we shall come before thy throne with an acceptable sacrifice.

Whilst in this world of doubt and perplexity, wandering in the mazes of error, and bewildered in the paths of uncertainty, do Thou, O God, enlighten our understandings, and make us perfect in that knowledge, which maketh wise unto salvation. Suffer not our minds to be cast down with finding our incapacity of clearly discovering those things, which thou hast placed beyond our reach; but grant, O Father of Mercies, that we may rest satisfied with those capacities which

thou hast given us; and be content to walk in humility and fear before thee, waiting for the glorious appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when that veil which now obscures our sight shall be drawn aside, and we shall see things clearly, as face to face. Suffer not our minds to be puffed up with the vanity of fruitless inquiries into things beyond our depth, but rather let us endeavour to acquire meekness and humility of heart, the most truly valuable accomplishments; that, through the assistance of thy holy Spirit, we may shine as lights in the world, and live to the praise and glory of thy name, desiring that our spirits may be bowed before thee in awful reverence, and that we may return thanksgiving for all thy mercies, under a deep sense, O Lord, that thou art worthy of all adoration and praise, both from thy dependant creatures in this world, and those blessed spirits, who are ever ministering before thy throne.

1772.

January.—Since the nature of man requires constant watchfulness, and a close inspection into our conduct is necessary, I think it may not be unprofitable to ask our-

selves the following, or similar questions, at the close of each day, before we go to rest.

1st. Did I rise at a proper time in the morning, and, not having indulged sloth and laziness, endeavour to collect my thoughts, for the purpose of devotion; with thankfulness reflect on the continued mercies of my Creator, and, from a deep sense of the necessity of divine grace, ardently pour out my soul, according to the ability given, in fervent supplications at the footstool of His throne, who is ever ready to give to those who ask aright?

2d. Have I endeavoured, in every occurrence of the day to preserve a meek and humble deportment; discarded every emotion to anger and resentment; not given way to any perverse thought or act, but checked every imagination that tended to evil?

3d. Have I avoided all untruth and dissimulation; endeavoured that my words might be few and savoury, and that temperance in all things might be preserved?

4th. Have I in no instance omitted to do good; administering according to ability given, both to the spiritual and temporal wants of my fellow creatures; remembering that time is not to be spent in idleness; and that it becomes those who have not their hands

full with labouring in the care of their own families, more especially to abound in works of charity, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick?

5th. Have I been sincere in my endeavours to act for the honour and glory of God; not playing the hypocrite, or seeking praise of men; but keeping my heart pure and undefiled, have I diligently improved those talents committed to my care, seeking to approve myself a faithful steward to Him who judgeth righteously?

Should we be unable to answer these queries in the affirmative, let us not judge them unsuitable; for though, finding we can answer them day after day, and year after year, with so little satisfaction, is apt sometimes to deter the mind from this close examination into our conduct, and the secret springs of all our actions; yet let us remember that an all-seeing eye takes such an inspection, and discerns even the most private thoughts and intents of the heart. If we are yet strangers and aliens from God, it is high time to begin our acquaintance with him, and while his day of visitation is still extended, turn to him with full purpose of heart, to serve him all the rest of our lives.

Let us observe where our conduct has been hitherto most defective, and endeavour more diligently to guard against those errors in future; having confidence, that the Power, which has hitherto protected us, will assist us in the performance of every good word and work. If we sincerely repent of our sins, we may rely on the mercy of God for forgiveness, knowing that He is faithful who hath promised. Not that a Christian is to rest satisfied with a state of continual sinning and repenting; he must bring forth works meet for repentance, such an amendment of life, as shows his repentance to be sincere.

He who wilfully or negligently commits sin, with the prospect that he shall repent, is not unlikely to forfeit the mercy of God, have his heart hardened, and be cut off in his transgressions. But if our errors have proceeded more from weakness and infirmities, than an intent to rebel against his commands, if we sincerely desire to amend, and fully purpose a greater watchfulness, that, through the assistance of Divine Grace, we may be enabled to withstand every temptation, there is then no doubt that he will compassionate, and suffer the penitential tear, through the mediation of a Saviour, to blot out those stains, which are otherwise indelibly marked in the

book of life. When we have arrived at this experience, we may safely close our eyes in peace; and though the day should no more dawn, nor these eyes again behold the sun; if, in the silent darkness of the night, while our bodies are enwrapt in sleep, which is the emblem of death, our souls should be translated to another world, yet we shall there behold the Sun of Righteousness, and awake to the enjoyments of a celestial paradise.

1773.

February 7th.—A MIND possessed of any sensibility, must often feel itself deeply humbled, under the consideration of its own unworthiness of the numberless blessings bestowed by a merciful Creator. When we perceive the mercies of God, and are led to reflect on his watchful providence, and care for our welfare, we can hardly forbear crying out, in the language of holy writ, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?"* I often feel myself deeply impressed with a sense of the manifold blessings bestowed, and in humble thankfulness of heart, pour out my supplication to the Most

* Psalm cxvi. 12.

High, that I may no longer be the unworthy receiver of such multiplied favours; but that my heart may be so melted with gratitude, and warmed with celestial love, that thanksgiving and praise may ascend from the inmost recesses of my soul. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."* The praises of the lip, and of the tongue, or even secret aspirations of the heart, are little trouble; but obedience to the cross of Christ, and complying with His terms of salvation—these are things quite contrary to the spirit of this world, and engage all his followers in a painful warfare. By a perfect obedience to divine commands, we most glorify that God who made us, show our belief in His supreme power, and acknowledge the right of government to be in His hands. But without this attention to the voice of instruction, and obedience to the precepts received, we can never expect a growth in religion, or a partaking of those celestial dews, which cause the spirit to ascend in grateful praise. Let us, therefore, diligently hearken and obey, that our souls may live; live, in that divine life, which is alone living to the praise of him who created us; and advancing from one degree of per-

* I Samuel, xv. 22.

fection to another, be prepared, at the conclusion of time, for translation to that kingdom where "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

February 13th.—A life of indulgence is not the way to arrive at Christian perfection. There are many things that appear trifles, which greatly tend to enervate the soul, and hinder its progress in the path to virtue and glory. The habit of indulging in things which our judgments cannot thoroughly approve, grows stronger and stronger by every act of self-gratification, and we are led on by degrees to an excess of luxury, which must greatly weaken our hands in the spiritual warfare.

I was led to these reflections, by the consideration how lying late in bed of a morning creeps on by degrees. It appears a very trifling thing, and we can hardly believe, that half an hour's indulgence that way, amounts to a crime; in itself it may not, and a general rule it would be impossible to fix; but I believe each individual is apt to determine one in his own mind, and the crime lies in extending our indulgence beyond that standard, which

* I Corinthians, xv. 53.

our judgments have fixed. In every other action of life, the same reasoning takes place. If we do not endeavour to do that which is right in every particular circumstance, though trifling, we shall be in great danger of letting the same negligence take place, in matters more essential, and travel backwards all our lives, instead of experiencing that progressive state, which leads to a habitation, where care and sorrow never enter. We should keep a vigilant and strict watch over ourselves, knowing that the enemy of our souls has various temptations to present, and where he cannot influence to sins of commission, frequently leads the mind to those of omission, on whose heels the former are likely soon to tread; for we are gradually led on from the one to the other, and the mind, enslaved by indulgence, and unwilling to exert itself, is soon reduced to a sink of corruption, and can hardly be roused from such a state to a proper sense of duty, or animated to live such a life, as will alone lead to glory hereafter.

August 30th.—The comfortable reflection, that a watchful providence regulates every event, and that nothing happens to us but for wise and good ends, greatly tends to

alleviate every earthly care, and prevent that anxiety, which would otherwise be the portion of mortals.

If sickness, or even death approach us in our near connexions, if prospects of various sorrows present themselves to our view, how calm is that mind whose dependance is on the Lord, who considers all the evils of this life, as things, that endure but for a moment; and that they may work "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"* It is often the earnest desire of my soul, that I may receive every dispensation with thankfulness; and that my will may be so wholly subjected to the Divine will, as to be able to say, with sincerity of heart, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

If we feel that all is right within, why should outward events disturb our repose? If the afflictions we meet with, are not judgments for past transgressions, and to rouse us more to a performance of duty in future, yet the sorrows that encompass us may be designed to wean us from this sublunary world, and engage us to fix our affections on heavenly objects, and lay up for ourselves treasures, where no thief can steal.

* II Cor. iv. 17.

September 26th.—On Thursday, the 23d, I went to pay a visit to a young woman lately married, with whom I have had a long intimacy. Every thing around the new-married couple seemed to bespeak affluence, and the conveniences of this life were plentifully bestowed. Certainly, to have servants obedient to a call, and a carriage ready to attend, are agreeable conveniences; and such circumstances as allow the dealing around us with a liberal hand, afford pleasing sensations to those who are possessed of sensibility of heart. But is not this elevation, too often, productive of pride? For my own part, I should have reason to fear being raised to such a state. A degree of self-sufficiency, and thinking more highly of ourselves for these goods of fortune, (which, in reality, make us no better than our fellow-creatures,) is apt to take place in the mind, and few sufficiently consider themselves as only stewards, accountable to their great Lord and Master, for all the blessings he bestows.

A meaner state of life, when exempted from poverty, is generally less dangerous; and many things we are obliged to submit to in such a condition, tend to humble the mind, and keep it in subjection. In most scenes of life, there are pleasures sufficient to make us

wish its continuance; and feeling this to be the case, we ought not to be desirous of greater temporal happiness, or ardent in its pursuit, knowing the necessity of having our affections set on things that are above, and being redeemed from the love of the world. Here we have no continuing city; all around us is transient and fading. We are only as travellers hastening to our eternal home, and if the accommodations we may meet with on the road are not quite what we would wish, yet we shall shortly be free from the necessity of any of them; and we should consider, that if the conveniences of life were greater, we should be less apt to look forward to the end of our journey; and, centering in present happiness, might quit our short-lived habitations with more regret.

October 15th.—"In thy presence, O God, is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."* In deep and awful silence, we are led to meditate on thy glorious kingdom, and feel ardent breathings of soul, that we may be made partakers of that blessed inheritance. Happy are those moments, in which we feel ourselves thus in-

* Psalm xvi. 11.

fluenced, and drawing near to thee in spirit, worship before thy throne in reverential awe. Most gracious Being, more and more animate me with a love of thee, and with fervent desires to feel my heart devoted to thy service. Strengthen, O Lord God, if it be thy will, the impressions of duty; rouse me from sloth and negligence, to a diligent waiting upon thee, and a watchful care that all may be done to thy glory. Let not the enticing pleasures of a deluding world steal my heart from thee, my everlasting Father; but so strengthen my hands, that I may be willing to give up all at thy command, and knowing that neither father nor mother, husband nor children, are to be preferred before thee, run the race that thou hast appointed me with singleness of heart. O Lord God, Thou whose penetrating eye sees the inmost recesses of my soul, Thou knowest, that in the hours of serious reflection, I am desirous of serving thee above all, though in deep humility, and a feeling sense of my own weakness, I am led to lament that how to perform that which I will, I know not. Assist my feeble endeavours, O gracious Father, and uphold me by thy power; remove every weight and every burden, and grant that I

may so live, while in this tabernacle of clay, as to look forward with a well-grounded hope of a glorious immortality!

December 22d.—I have sometimes thought that when the attendance of meetings for the worship of the Supreme Being, is accompanied with inconvenience or danger, it serves rather as a spur to prompt us to diligence when there, that our labour and pains may not prove wholly in vain. A careful watch over the mind is as necessary for our final preservation, as over our actions. If the inside is polluted, the outside can hardly be kept clean; and that disposition to rambling thoughts, which we so frequently find, when gathered under the pretence of inward worship, requires the greatest care to be speedily checked, otherwise, the important end for which we profess to be met, will not only be frustrated, but the hours thus negligently passed will rise against us at the great day of condemnation, when we shall be called to an account for all those talents which have been committed to our care, and every man will receive a reward according to his works.

1774.

2d, 1st M°.—While encompassed in these bodies of clay, what trifling events tend to discompose us! Our happiness seems liable to be overset by every minute occurrence, and the least cross event disturbs that tranquillity of mind, without which true felicity can never be enjoyed. Surely this life is of little worth, when withdrawn from the prospect of a glorious immortality. It is thy blest province, O Religion, to sweeten the bitter cup of life, smooth the rugged paths which we are obliged to tread, and comfort the soul with a lively hope, that when freed from these tabernacles of clay, she may soar aloft into the regions of a blessed eternity.

However discomposed, however afflicted we may be, yet this hope still remains, a never-failing source of peace; and the mind that sincerely desires so to overcome every propensity to evil, as to be accepted in the sight of a most holy God, will feel a renewal of strength to get the better of all those passions which war against its peace, and to run with patience the race that is set before it.

When we take a view of that boundless Eternity which awaits us, and contemplate

the glories of a celestial kingdom, we can scarcely forbear feeling surprise, that a soul destined for such a mansion, should be liable to be ruffled by the insignificant things of this life. Yet so it is; probably to keep us in that state of humility, which makes us sensible of the necessity of learning in the school of true wisdom; and that, feeling our own propensity to error, we may implore that grace which can alone enable us to overcome, and depend on that Power who is all-sufficient, and will preserve, in every temptation, the mind that diligently seeks counsel from Him.

4th, 2*d M°*.—A particular attention to the words of a minister, so as to imprint them on the memory, with a design afterwards to set them down in writing, I have sometimes thought tended to lessen the benefit that might otherwise be received from his ministry; the design of which is to draw the mind nearer to the true Minister of the Sanctuary, and which has often been found effectual to inspire with heavenly affections, and ardent breathings of soul to the Source of all good.

20th, 3*d M°*.—Every earthly blessing seems to inspire a sensible mind with a lively grati-

tude to the great Author of every gift, and raises an acknowledgment of our unworthiness, even of the least of his favours. Happy would it be, if this sensibility awakened in us lasting impressions, and made us diligent in serving so beneficent a Master. If temporal enjoyments can raise this thankfulness of heart, how much more gratitude ought we to feel for those blessings which are of infinite duration, the visitations of that Power, which would not only conduct us through life, but, at the period of time, receive us into those mansions, where His presence causes the fruition of durable joy! What shall I render thee, for all thy mercies? has been the frequent language of my soul. A consciousness of deserving judgment rather than mercy, has frequently been the feeling of my heart, when the Lord's hand has been bountifully opened, and liberally poured forth of his blessings. How much shall I have to answer for, if I keep back that which is required! If, instead of being melted with the fire of pure love, and brought into humiliation of spirit, I remain still as gold mingled with dross, shall I not have cause to fear that the furnace of affliction will be heated seven times hotter than its usual heat; or that my heart will become as stone, which in-

creases its hardness by the heat of the same furnace, which melts and purifies the gold?

27th, 3d M°.—Hearing some persons mention that their preference of silent meetings was increasing, I was led to consider the happiness of having bread in our own houses, and water in our own cisterns; when we need not the help of man, but can worship, in awful silence, the Father of spirits, in spirit and in truth. For my own part, I feel at present far from this desirable attainment; clouds and darkness seem to overshadow me. In this state of mind, outward help is frequently beneficial; and if the spring lies deep, and we have no strength to dig, the joint labour of others assists us in coming to that refreshment which we know not how to obtain. Nevertheless, I am well convinced, that a dependance on outward help will avail us nothing. If we are nourished by the bread of life, it must be by sinking deep into our own hearts, and experiencing the living powerful word to be near us, which will guide us into all truth. We are too apt to let a careless negligence take hold of our minds when assembled together for the purpose of worship; instead of keeping them diligently

fixed on the supreme Author of our being, and endeavouring to wait in the silence of all flesh, to hear that inspeaking word which would not only show us our states and conditions, and inform us what we ought to do; but, in his own good time, prepare a sacrifice acceptable to himself, and cause us to rejoice in the overshadowings of his love.

18*th*, 9*th M°*.—The duty of many of us lies very much in scenes of active life, and various occupations may take up a considerable part of our time; but in this hurry and bustle, without setting apart proper seasons for retirement, the mind is very apt to get bewildered, and too often settles in a false rest. We are ready to adopt opinions that are suited to our inclinations without sufficiently examining their tendency, and occupy ourselves beside the proper business; or suffer our minds to be engrossed by such things as make work only for repentance. This I at times experience to be my own case, and though I would by no means make the path of virtue appear dismal or gloomy, yet I confess, I could never yet find it to be strewed with honeysuckles and roses but have been rather inclined to embrace the saying of our Sa-

viour to his disciples; "In the world ye shall have tribulation,"* but in me peace. Great part of our happiness, while in this present state of being, arises from a well-grounded hope of a glorious immortality; and though we are to receive with thankfulness the various undeserved blessings that are bestowed upon us in terrestrial things, yet the uncertainty of their duration makes it improper that we should set our affections on them; but using the things of this world as not abusing them, we should endeavour to maintain an equal mind in prosperity or adversity, and with humble resignation of heart, say, "Thy will, O God, not mine be done:" trusting that all things will work together for our good, and being anxiously solicitous about nothing, but that we may be established in righteousness, and gain admittance into that kingdom which will never end.

I have considered the very dangerous situation of those who step before their guide, and have been earnestly solicitous that such sin might not be laid to my charge. Darkness is likely to overwhelm them: and though for a time the warmth of imagination may carry them on, without their perceiving that they

* John, xvi. 33.

have outrun their leader, yet they will soon find the necessity of his guidance, and having lost him, will not know which way to take. Though I have nothing of this sort to upbraid myself with, yet I have some reason to fear that I may have fallen into the contrary extreme, and instead of walking in the brightness of that light which is as a lanthorn to direct our steps, have loitered so far behind, as scarcely to be able to behold its glimmerings. Though I ever judge this to be the safer state, yet I have felt it prejudicial to the health of the soul; and though "he that believeth shall not make haste,"* yet neither must he suffer a lingering disposition to prevail, and stay so far behind his light, as to endanger its clearness being lessened.

2*d*, 10*th* M°.—"As I have lived, so I shall close, with the most unshaken assurance, that we have not followed cunningly devised fables, but the pure, living, and eternal substance." These expressions of S. Fothergill, brought to my mind sentiments that have often occurred, respecting our faith being strengthened by the assurance of a departing friend; who can testify, that the way to arrive at a glorious immortality, is by

* Isaiah, xxviii. 16.

taking heed, and diligently attending to that light, or inward manifestation of the Divine will, which is given us to direct our steps. Few of us, who seriously consider our latter end, can pass through this probationary state, without some seasons of doubt and anxiety. The fear of being led by a false light, or thinking those things essential which are not so, will sometimes prevail; and, from beholding the variety of sentiments in the world, we are ready to halt between two opinions, instead of giving up implicitly to divine instructions. But when we consider the end of those who have most diligently given themselves up to follow that which they believed to be their duty; their pleasing reflections on every instance of obedience, and satisfaction from having acted to the best of their knowledge, it seems to inspire us with resolution to pursue the same conduct, and to run with cheerfulness and alacrity the race which is set before us.

Though my mind seems, at times, enveloped in darkness, and thick clouds gather all around, yet can I, from a degree of experience, close in with the above sentiments, that in obeying that inward teacher, the light of truth, I have not followed cunningly de-

vised fables, but have felt that peace which is an earnest of acceptance with God. O that my mind were but more diligently engaged, to seek this Divine light, and to be guided by it, in every action of life!

However easy and negligent we may be in the days of health and prosperity, yet, in the days of adversity, keen reflections will take place; and when stretched on the bed of sickness we shall count all but as dross in comparison of gaining Christ; of having an assurance, that when this tabernacle of clay is dissolved, we shall obtain an admittance into his kingdom. Then it is, when divested of all earthly enjoyments, we behold things in their true light; we perceive the littleness and vanity of every thing here, and are convinced that the only object worth our earnest pursuit, is that blessedness which shall be hereafter. I often think, if we did but use as much diligence to make our calling and election sure, as many of us employ in settling our worldly affairs, we should not be so much unprepared for our final period. But the mind of man is apt to busy itself about trifles, whilst things of real importance remain unnoticed. We fix our eyes on those things that nearly surround us, without

being sufficiently attentive to prepare for the time of our dissolution, which we are generally inclined to behold as afar off.

1775.

I HAVE often been made sensible that there is a spirit which giveth life, and whose influence sweetens every bitter cup. However I may have sometimes feared a delusion of the mind, and that there was presumption in believing a secret union with the Divine Spirit to be at times felt; yet an impression, of which at other times we are powerfully sensible, seems to bring its own evidence that the Lord thus graciously condescends; and we are then animated to worship him in spirit and in truth. If this be enthusiasm, it is such an enthusiasm as I wish to feel, and I rejoice in those seasons as festival days of Zion. If they are all a delusion, on what is our faith founded? The Scriptures abound with testimonies to this Divine inspiration, and the New Testament clearly enforces that there can be no acceptable worship, but that which is influenced by the Divine Spirit, through the power of the Holy Ghost operating on our minds, of which we are made partakers through the sanctifying blood of a Redeemer,

who died for our sins, that fallen man might again be raised unto life. It is alone by faith in him that we can be cleansed from our sins; by giving way to his power we shall be perfected in all holiness, and be at last received into his glorious kingdom.

5th, 4th M°.—"Into thine hand," O Lord, "I commit my spirit."* This is the frequent language of the truly humbled soul, with ardent desires that He, who can alone guide us aright, would condescend to behold us with an eye of tender compassion, and conduct us safely through this vale of doubt and anxiety. O Lord, look down upon us, and help us. We are wholly unable of ourselves to perform any good word or work; assist us, we beseech thee, in this our pilgrimage, and make us willing, yet more and more, to devote ourselves to thy service. "Into thine hand, I commit my spirit;" deal with me according as thou wilt; lead me through the valley of tears, and into the deepest scenes of humiliation, if they are necessary to purify my soul. But, O gracious God, blot out my transgressions from before thine eyes. Assist me to approach thee, O Lord, in humble faith; and, seeing my own insufficiency, let

* Psalm xxxi. 5.

me depend wholly on thee, who can strengthen us for the performance of every good word and work, and enable us to come up in all thy commandments. Let a glorious, holy hope that thou wilt still preserve, animate my drooping faith, and encourage me more diligently to pursue those things which make for peace. In the seasons of humiliation, thou hast set before my view the vanity of all worldly enjoyments; and that there is nothing truly desirable, but a place in thy favour. More and more confirm these sentiments, O Father of mercies, and cause me to rejoice in every dispensation that draws me nearer to thy holy power; that, being baptised with thy spirit, I may bring forth fruits unto holiness, the end whereof is everlasting life.

7th, 6th M°.—My mind has been considerably impressed with the advice which our friend C. Phillips gave us, at Devonshire-house Meeting yesterday morning, and it has occasioned a query to arise, whether I have not myself suffered by a too great taste for speculative reasoning, which, there is room to fear, much oftener tends to darken the mind than to illuminate it.

Our friend, after having exhorted us to 'consider our ways,' and enlarged, with her

usual clearness, on the subject, expressed a fear, that many were amusing themselves with disquisitions that tended not to profit; entering deeply into inquiries concerning natural things, and what was doing in the world; which knowledge tended to puff up the mind, and that people were too apt to clothe themselves with it. That it would turn to no profit in the day of affliction, and that we should then want something better to fly to. That we had no need of Egyptian knowledge to instruct us in things necessary to salvation; and that, however we might despise those, and reckon them enthusiastic, who sought for knowledge from God, yet the inspiration of his spirit had declared, "A good understanding have all they that do His commandments."* That all our acquirements in natural knowledge should be under the direction of this superior wisdom, which was alone able to instruct us in the way of Salvation.

Observation, and the witness in ourselves, may convince us that these arguments are drawn from solid truth. The animating, quickening power of the Spirit of Christ, operating on our minds, is that alone which can perfect us in the path of holiness; and

* Psalm cxi. 10.

all our reasonings can never bring us to this heart-enlivening faith, which will enable us to walk in the commandments of the Lord, and give us that peace which no outward afflictions can ever take away. I have sometimes been ready to form resolutions, that I would never read any thing which might shake my faith in an inward principle, able to direct; or which might lead to such reasonings as I have found to end in a wilderness state, a state of doubt and perplexity, not easily passed through. But a dread of enthusiasm seems greatly to prevail over my mind, and to make me fearful of giving up sufficiently to the heavenly vision. The great impropriety of conduct, in some who have pretended to be led by inward feelings, has often made me fear that a deception might take place in my own mind; and that, under the apprehension of doing that which was required by the Supreme Being, I might be acting against, rather than for the truth. Yet something is certainly necessary, besides moral rectitude; neither can that be kept to, but through the influencing power of a superior spirit. Experience more and more convinces me, that what may be known of God is made manifest within, and that no man knoweth the things of God, but by the Spirit

of God. Human learning, and human knowledge must all be laid low in the dust, and we must count every thing as loss, that hinders us from the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; coming to him, in the humility and nothingness of little children, that we may be instructed by him, and replenished with that knowledge, which maketh wise unto salvation.

Human knowledge, if not necessary, is yet beneficial to us, in our intercourse through life, and in that view, by no means to be discouraged; the acquiring it is often a pleasing amusement and relaxation to the mind, which cannot be constantly employed in spiritual exercises, and is not necessarily engaged on other objects. But let us carefully remember, that all our powers and faculties should be under the direction of the best wisdom, and that we ought not to be exalted in our minds, by any acquirements, for "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."* It is the love of God flowing in the soul, which will enable us to do most good in the world, and to keep a conscience void of offence, towards Him and towards men.

11*th*, 6*th M°*.—Not to be desirous of dis-

* 1 Cor. viii. 1.

closing the state of our minds to a brother or a sister, was a piece of advice we had given us this morning, for that the Lord was sufficient to counsel and guide us through every difficulty, or words to the same purpose.

I have often thought that a disposition was apt to prevail over the mind, when oppressed with anxiety, to seek for outward help and consolation. But if we seriously consider, we must know that God is the Author of all comfort, and that we cannot meet with suitable advice or consolation, but as it is administered through the influence of his power. If our minds are truly dependant on him, and we are seeking the knowledge of his will, with full purpose of heart to come up in obedience, his light will in due time enlighten our minds, and we may receive instruction from His Spirit, in solemn, awful silence.

Disclosing our sentiments to a friend may often afford present relief, but it certainly requires caution how we exercise this freedom, lest we endeavour to shake off a burden designed for our profit, and by impatience deprive ourselves of that inward consolation, which we might otherwise have experienced, by enduring patiently the operation of the Lord's hand. He is certainly all-sufficient, but we must witness his baptizing power,

and patiently bear those burdens he inflicts. If the weight seem heavy, let us not complain, or be too anxious to be relieved from it, before the appointed time. A way has often been made, where we have seen no way; and by walking in humble faith, and relying solely on God, we shall experience his spirit to be near us, and to support us through every dispensation. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."*

[*Extract from letter.*]—We need not go far from home, to observe a difference in customs and manners, from those we have been used to in our own little circle. Let us not reject, as improper, every thing to which we have not been accustomed, nor indulge a blind partiality for those habits in which we have been trained. A difference in many little particulars characterizes different counties; and where the distance is greater, these distinctions and singularities are likely to increase. If the people about our own spot excel in some things, they are in their turn excelled in others. Let us endeavour to pick out the best in all, and having determined from judgment, rather than education,

* Psalm lxxiii. 24.

adopt those sentiments in every circumstance most likely to tend to our real benefit. Things really indifferent, we should be ready to treat as such, and not be inclined to censure, or turn to ridicule, every thing that corresponds not with our own old notions, which may too frequently be adopted from prejudice rather than reason.

24th, 7th M°.—Having just finished reading an exposition of the New Testament, I was led to consider, that without care, we might adopt explanations contrary to the truth, and receive hurt, rather than benefit from our labours.

There is too much of a disposition, in most people, to embrace tenets which they are zealous to maintain; and a writer, having formed his own system, is much inclined to such explanations as may enforce it, though, probably, without perceiving his own partiality in the case. To understand the Scriptures aright, we have certainly need of some divine illumination, a ray of that spirit by which they were inspired. This is the safest and most certain guide, and will assuredly so enlighten us, as to explain every thing necessary for our salvation. But since those books have been translated from

one language to another, and all learned men do not agree in the import of the same words, probably some may have been translated with a signification different from the original, and convey ideas that were not intended. By those who have a knowledge of the ancient language, a dark text may sometimes have fresh light thrown upon it, and be rendered less obscure; and the difference of opinions should at least have this good effect—to make us careful not to be over zealous about those things which we do not thoroughly understand. We have sufficient knowledge to guide us safe to the harbour of rest. The precepts laid down in Scripture to regulate our conduct, are plain, and easy to be understood. But the inquisitive mind of man is apt to be impertinently curious, and search into those matters he was not designed to understand. This leads to natural reasoning on things that cannot be comprehended by our natural faculties, and we get more and more bewildered in the mazes of perplexity and error. If we read the Scriptures with diligent attention, and compared one part with another, observing the general tendency throughout the whole, we should often see, more plainly than we do, the import of many texts, which,

selected by themselves, seem hard to be understood.

27th, 7th M°.—It is good for us to be humbled under a sense of our own imperfections; to feel our spirits broken and contrite before God. We have cause to follow the Apostle's exhortation, to rejoice in tribulation, as it often brings us into humility of heart; and whatever tends to pull down self, should be received with thankfulness. The nature of man likes not to be brought low; and when the enemy of our souls cannot seduce us to gross acts of sin, he frequently endeavours to exalt us with a glorying in our own perfections. Spiritual pride is the worst of all evils that can befal us; it sets up with a notion of its own holiness, and leads from that humility which is so essentially necessary for us poor dependant mortals.

If we take a view of our own state, a moment's serious reflection must convince us of our weakness. What has enabled us to escape those sins which we have escaped, but the goodness of God, assisting us and guarding us from evil? Without Him, we have no power, no might of our own, that can preserve us. Surely, these considerations must check every approach towards pride,

and engage us earnestly to pray to be kept before him in the innocence of little children.

My spirits are often bowed under the awful consideration of the wretched state I should be in, unassisted with his divine power; and earnest prayers ascend from the inmost recesses of my soul, that I may ever be preserved in humility and fear. Feeling the natural propensity of self to desire to be exalted, I have frequently received with thankfulness those dispensations which have caused severe mortification, and, under the painful exercise of such trials, have, in deep humility, put up this petition from the bottom of my heart, that the Lord would neither let his hand spare, nor his eye pity, until his judgments had consumed every thing that was offensive in his sight, and the whole will was subjected to his power; knowing that though his chastisements are for the present not joyous, but grievous and hard to be borne, yet they will work for our sanctification and redemption.

Save me from myself, from that natural spirit that would rule within me; and preserve me by thy power, O Lord God. Keep me from thinking more highly of myself than I ought to think. Let me see myself as thy penetrating eye beholds me. Bow my spirit

in deep reverence and awful fear before thee, and grant that I may walk in that humility, which holds self in no esteem, but is ever ready to acknowledge thee, the Author of all good. Search me, O Lord, and try me, prove me, and know my ways, and if there be any secret sin, do thou it away.

4th, 8th M°.—In a disposition to be displeased with ourselves, we can seldom be much pleased with others: mutual satisfaction is necessary to render any intercourse really delightful; and if, in the company of our friends, we suffer our ideas to dwell on the unworthiness of ourselves, and our many failings, it may lead us as far from deriving pleasure from their conversation, as if we were thinking of the imperfections we might find in them. It is pride (at least in part) that leads us to this vexation of spirit; and we may be permitted to fall into many little errors, without warning, to keep us in humility, to show us the necessity of constant watchfulness, and that we cannot depend on being able to support ourselves for a moment. True humility, though it leads us to sorrow for our faults, and deep repentance, yet is opposite to vexation of spirit. It engages us to walk with more circumspection, and in

that fear which can alone preserve us from evil, but suffers no murmuring, no complaining, nor discontent, but patiently and meekly endures that censure which the failing may deserve. It leads us to charity in our judgments of others; to put the most favourable construction on their actions, and to that forbearance which we find so necessary in our intercourse through life. Cheerfulness and discontent, as well as many other passions, are exceedingly catching, and the disposition of the people we are with, has great influence over our own. This should engage us to cultivate a sweetness and evenness of temper, that we may not cause uneasiness in the bosom of those we love; but possessing our souls in patience and resignation, we shall be instrumental in diffusing that calmness and tranquillity, which will promote the happiness of others, and which will again circulate through our own breasts, fraught with the rich reward of peace.

6th, 8*th M°*.—In the morning we went to meeting at Winchmore-hill, and having sat in silence, towards the close of the meeting some of the following reflections involuntarily arose in my mind. I was considering the uncertainty of every thing in this life, and the

necessity of resignation, when it occurred to me, that a pettish, discontented temper might, from feeling disappointments and mortifications, be induced to reject the blessings which Providence is willing to bestow. But afflictions should work patience, and not make us peevishly refuse those favours that are still permitted us. If an acquaintance or friend were to offer us some civility or accommodation, something that he expected might afford us pleasure, he would think himself very unkindly treated, if we morosely told him we would not accept of his offer because he might happen to want a return, at some future period; and would not, very suddenly, again make us any fresh offer of friendship. And must it not be equally unpleasing to the Father of mercies, if we refuse those blessings he is willing to bestow, from no other motive but because he may again call for them; and that we wish to acquire such an indifference, as to put it out of his power to afflict us with any temporal things. This is very far from arriving at that resigned frame of mind, which is urged as a necessary duty. Resignation and indifference are two very different qualities, and, indeed, hardly compatible with each other; for we can never be said to be resigned to

that, about which we are wholly indifferent. A confidence in the goodness of God, and belief that he permits no evil to befall us but for some beneficial purpose, should engage us cheerfully to acquiesce in all his dispensations; but since "Our thanks are cold, for blessings unenjoyed," and a grateful heart is the most acceptable tribute of praise, we should endeavour to cultivate a disposition thankfully to receive his favours, though with that humility and resignation which submits every future event to the divine disposal.

8th, 10th M°.—"He that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as" God "is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil."* This text seemed to dwell with a lively impression on my mind, when I met with it, after having been considering the difference of faith, more peculiarly those sentiments relative to our Saviour, and his offering of himself, and the Redemption of mankind. It seems a mystery hid from ages and generations, and yet remains beyond the power of our faculties to comprehend. Wherefore that method was chosen by infinite wisdom, to reinstate lost mankind in his favour, seems to be a query of no importance to us to be resolved.

* John iii. 7, 8.

We have sufficient evidence to be convinced, that by the transgression of Adam, a curse was entailed on all the human race; and that, by the coming of Christ, a door was again opened, which effectually made way for their entrance into a glorious immortality. That this power of Christ operated before, as well as after his crucifixion, and that all who followed the dictates of an inward law, written in their hearts, or the more immediate commands of the Most Holy One, when he was pleased, in that manner, to communicate his will, will be partakers in that inheritance, which, in these latter days, is more plainly revealed to be the destined portion of the righteous.

But that Christ's sacrifice for sin was such as excluded the necessity of our endeavouring to come up in righteousness and true holiness; that we may rely on his merits, and rest satisfied that he has done all for us, seems a doctrine so repugnant to reason, and to our apprehensions of the Divine Being, who is infinite perfection, and cannot behold sin, but with abhorrence, that it is amazing to me it should ever have gained ground. It is a faith that opens a door to every evil work, and destroys the whole tenor of Scripture, which so strongly enforces the necessity

of purity of life to render us acceptable in the sight of the Divine Being, and gain us an admittance into his presence. If Christ has done all for us, without us, then adieu to all virtue and morality; nothing remains for us to do but to consider our present good. With regard to every doubtful doctrine, it has frequently been the sincere and fervent prayer of my soul, that the Lord would establish my faith on the right foundation, and open my eyes, plainly to perceive those things that belong to my everlasting peace.

Considering the darkness and obscurity that surround us while inclosed in these tenements of clay, it has often been my wish to be so exercised in humility, as to prevent judging those who think differently from myself, and cannot agree in the same faith; more particularly such as appear to bring forth good fruit. I would wish to leave Him to judge, who sees every secret purpose of the soul, and I have no doubt, will take great compassion on those, who, though they may greatly err, yet sincerely desire to approve themselves in his sight.

Reflecting a little on my own present faith, or articles of belief, I was led to set down the summary as follows:—I believe in one God, Father and Maker of the universe,

and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. I believe in the Holy Ghost, which seems to me but another definition of the operation of the Spirit of Christ; and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are One.

This I believe, because there appears undoubted evidence, that these are the declarations of Truth itself; and it becomes us to rely on the words of the Divine Majesty, though the things which he declares are past our comprehension. I believe the things recorded concerning Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension, and that He is the means appointed by the Father, through which alone, we can gain admittance into an everlasting kingdom. That there is a necessity for such a faith in him, as showeth itself by good works; and that there is such a spiritual life, or seed sown in every heart, as will enable us, by submitting to its operations, to be created anew after the image of Christ Jesus, in righteousness and true holiness. That the many evil propensities we feel warring within us, are consequences of the fallen state of man, and which we, of ourselves, have no power to overcome, but should still continue enslaved by them, without the manifestation of the power of Christ in our hearts enabling us to get the

better of those enemies of our peace, and so purifying us by the operation of his spirit, as to present us faultless before the presence of the Father.

This is the faith which I feel sufficient to engage me fervently to apply to that power which can alone enable me to overcome, without considering its various distinctions: and, though I wish to form right apprehensions of them, yet the inquiry seems hitherto rather perplexing than edifying. I trust, the sincere in heart will be sufficiently enlightened to prevent their essentially mistaking their way; that He who formed, still careth for them, and points out that which is necessary for their salvation. I desire rather to wait, in awful silence, for the inward manifestations of the Divine will, (which I am fully persuaded He condescends to afford,) and exercise myself in the performance of those virtues he requires, than amuse my mind with speculations on things which are too deep for me; not seeking applause from men, but the approbation of my own conscience, which bears witness for God. This will bring more profit than the nicest disquisitions; and if we carefully impress on our minds the necessity of holiness, and the different end of the righteous and

the wicked, and endeavour to obey that monitor within, which is a secret reprover of every evil work, we shall witness that Power to be near, which can sustain in all difficulties, and experience those reviving sensations from the growth of a spiritual life, which the mere speculatist can neither comprehend nor feel.

16*th*, 10*th M°*.—When I have considered the very great fondness for retirement and solitude which has prevailed with some of the most religious people, and the little relish they had for any company, I have been tempted to think, that if it were embraced on right principles, they must enjoy a state advanced to a near communion with God. For, in the common course of things, we not only stand in need of the assistance of each other, but likewise feel a want of unbending our minds, occasionally, in the social conversation of our friends.

For myself, I much love a portion of retirement; and can with pleasure spend three or four hours in each day, in reading, writing, or meditating alone. But a kind of stupefaction often succeeds a long solitude, when the mind not only becomes unfitted for meditation, but every employment is irk-

some. In such a state, I believe a little conversation is exceedingly profitable; it gives fresh vigour to the mind, and again fits it for action. Besides, this friendly intercourse and exchange of ideas is a principal means of improving our understandings; and though, in general, practised more as an innocent recreation and amusement, than for any other purpose, yet is often not without its use, even in the most important interests.

The truly religious man who wishes little converse but with himself and his Maker, may be drawn to solitude, partly from his natural disposition, or, it may be, from such a state of inward purity, as can raise his mind, almost wholly, to delight itself in God. Though we justly call this the highest state of happiness, yet the chusing, contrary to our inclinations, a very solitary life, might be far from a means of bringing us to the enjoyment of it; and, on the contrary, only fill us with a gloomy discontent, and enfeeble our powers, which were probably designed for a station of more active virtue, and a greater portion of the necessary business of life. This station, a social disposition will contribute to make us fill up with greater cheerfulness; and we should endeavour always to think our allotted place the best for

us, unless particular motives induce us to a change.

It is not adopting one or the other mode of life that constitutes a religious man; and though it is necessary that our natural inclinations should be governed, yet acting in direct opposition to them, often subjects us to more temptation; since the heart and affections must be subdued under a right spirit, as well as our outward conduct regulated.

By laying too great a restraint upon ourselves in innocent indulgences, we may contract a sourness of temper before we are aware, and a severity of disposition which might lead to want of charity, and censoriousness. I would by no means plead for a liberty not founded in truth, or for the least indulgence in those things which we feel in our own minds a secret witness against; but, because we see this or that particular path trodden by those who are far advanced in piety, let us not immediately conclude, that to arrive at the same holy state, we must follow them in every external step; since inward holiness, or devotion of the heart to God, consists not in this or that outward circumstance of life, but in having a will wholly given up to him, and being resigned to fol-

low wherever his secret manifestation may lead, even though it should be in a path wholly untrodden before. I believe Infinite Wisdom sometimes sees meet to draw to great particularity, in the mode and conduct of life, individuals who are devoted to his service; sometimes to prove their obedience, or at others, more strongly to testify against the excessive luxuries and corruptions that are in the world, and which *reason* must acknowledge to be contrary to the spirit of God, and the general good of mankind.

To attend closely to these secret instructions is the duty of each individual; and, without seeking after particularities, carefully to endeavour to avoid that which is evil, and pursue that which is good.

21*st*, 10*th* *M°*.—The reproofs of affectionate friends are seldom levelled against trifles; they wish to save us from all unnecessary pain, and will hardly prevail with themselves to run the risk of giving us the least disgust about those things which seem not essentially important to our real happiness. If we search closely into ourselves, we shall, many of us, find that we have a greater repugnance to being told of those defects that hardly amount to faults, than of

failings of more consequence: self-love seems to rise more powerfully, and we are apt to attribute it to something else than good-will, when such things are mentioned. We know other actions to be of much more moment, and from making them the principal object of our attention, are ready to conclude that a degree of jealousy operates on the minds of those who make lesser matters the object of censure. But this is far from using the means necessary to be pursued for our benefit. Very trifling circumstances not only prepossess people in our favour, but frequently give them a better or a worse opinion of the cause in which we are engaged. This being the case, we should endeavour to think nothing beneath our notice, and to arrive at such an habitual circumspection, as may enable us to perform every action well, carefully guarding not only against essential errors, but against every thing that may occasion prejudice or unnecessary disgust. The observation of these lesser failings is likewise a means of preserving us in more humility, and keeping down that proud spirit, which is so apt to exalt itself, and draw from the watch-tower.

Though we have sufficient reason to be humble, from the consideration of our in-

ability, of ourselves, to perform the least action well, yet we are apt not to dwell in this frame; and I have sometimes thought that we should rather rejoice than be angry, at any thing that may bring us into this state of humiliation, and make us, in our own eyes, of no reputation. This state frequently raises strong cries in our hearts to God, that he would be pleased to forgive us our past trespasses, and more powerfully support us in future, that we may not be vanquished by the enemy. And here, we are kept in a firm dependance upon God; and in praying fervently for the assistance of his grace, we shall find a renewal of strength; and, instead of sinking into despair, pursue our warfare with fresh vigour and alacrity of mind.

[*Extract from a letter.*]—I could wish, my dear friend, that we may put in practice the advice thou gavest, in a former epistle, to be ready to excuse the failings of each other. If we expect perfection, we shall most likely meet with disappointment; and a disposition to put the most favourable construction on the actions of others, is frequently a means of promoting our own happiness. Yet, let not the difficulty of attaining perfection deter us from the pursuit; the more we endeavour

after it, the nearer we shall certainly approach towards it, and our labours will be crowned with some degree of success. It is not often that we keep too strict a hand over ourselves; and if we judge our own actions with severity, while we deal with a lenient hand towards others, it will probably only bring us to the impartial scale of justice.

I have sometimes heard the doctrine of perfection spoken of as dangerous; as tending to puff up the mind, and make us think we are arrived at that state. But I could never see it in this light; and I think a state of humility and reverent fear so essential a part of perfection, that a high mind is a sufficient evidence of our being far from it.

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"* must be a striking answer to every proud boaster, and effectually silence him. When we consider, that of ourselves we can do nothing, that even if we have done well one day, some temptation may be too strong for us the next, and that we have no safety but in an humble dependance upon God, one would think it would check every presumptuous thought, and lead us to fear and trembling. I believe, the more true religion operates on the mind, the more it will lead

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

us into this state of awful fear; and, seeing the multitude of temptations that surround us, our minds will be engaged in watchfulness and prayer, that we may be preserved through the various conflicts of time, and find a resting-place in an eternal habitation.

29th, 10th M°.—The many difficulties of expression that a minister, whom I sometimes hear with satisfaction, seemed to meet with this morning, have led me to reflect on the difficulty of the true minister in dividing the word aright, and not suffering it to be mixed with his own conceptions and imaginations. Surely, nothing can do, but a firm and steady adherence to the light of life, and a close attention, strictly and simply to follow its dictates. This must create rather a backwardness in speaking; and, when it appears to be a duty, will necessarily occasion it to be performed in much humility and fear. Yet I have sometimes thought, that good motives may induce a minister to speak, without feeling himself sufficiently baptized into living power. When he beholds a multitude of sheep as without a shepherd, and seeking for something to direct their wandering steps, a heart warmed with the love of mankind may sometimes wish to point out the path

which would lead from the barren mountains, and conduct them to the fold of Christ. Here, I believe, self sometimes may get uppermost, and that work may be set about in his own will, which can only be truly profitable, when performed under the direction of our supreme Head. But I would endeavour to guard against too freely judging; there may be those who are ministers on the right foundation, who may be permitted to feel themselves at a loss when the word of command has been given, with a design to keep them in humility, and preserve them from a confidence in self. Besides, the difference of disposition which we find in ourselves should lead us to caution, lest our want of unity with what is said, should proceed wholly from the deficiency in our own state, and our incapacity for judging aright.

Speaking to others is certainly an awful and important work; the desire of applause from men must be entirely laid aside, and ministers must seek only to approve themselves before God. The natural propensity to follow their own judgments, and contrive the most proper times and seasons when to speak or be silent, must be conquered; and they must endeavour to preserve a clean vessel, that it may be ready for the Master's

use; it can only be truly serviceable in his hand, and when he is pleased to pour into it of the water of life, with the commission to distribute to others. I have frequently thought that the business of true ministers was like that of the rest of the people; not to attend to things outward, but endeavour to draw the mind into a patient, humble waiting upon God, that he may show us our own states, and our own insufficiency, and enable us to perform acceptable worship to Him, in the secret of our souls. In this frame of mind, without meditating on the state of others, or querying whether they can say any thing tending to their benefit, if they find present duty calls to reprove or advise, there is better certainty of its being influenced by the divine spring, and that it will flow pure and uncorrupted, to the benefit of the hearers. But where a contrary disposition takes place, and that contemplating the depravity of many, is more their business than deeply entering into their own state, there is danger of suggestions arising from past experience, or that something will occur, which may be concluded to be designed for the benefit of those who seem farther from the divine life. This, it is to be feared, will not bring their hearers

to that state of humble contrition, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which can alone truly profit the soul. The hearing with pleasure moral truths, may rather contribute to make them more satisfied with their own state, without seeking an entrance into the holy of holies, where the Minister of the sanctuary would speak convincingly to their souls.

16*th*, 12*th M°*.—We can hardly pass a day without meeting with some occurence which convinces us of the necessity of keeping a constant guard over our words and actions. A calm command over ourselves in every scene, is exceedingly desirable; it should be our constant endeavour to acquire it: but we are too apt to let a warmth of temper arise at the misconduct of others, or even at their entertaining opinions different from ourselves; hence arise argument and contradiction; which are but seldom accompanied with that meekness which leads to the discovery of truth.

We may sometimes hear it pleaded in favour of warm and hasty people, that we see the worst of them, and that their passion having vented itself, is entirely over. This, I believe, may be the case; but how badly is

it over! By making themselves appear ridiculous, and by showing their want of command over themselves, convincing beholders how little they are able to instruct others. Besides, every indulgence of improper tempers, does but increase the propensity to them. Those who appear more calm, have, I believe, sometimes an equal war within themselves, and it may be longer before the conflict is over. But as we shall readily acknowledge the propriety, and even necessity, of having our passions under subjection, we should endeavour to use those means most likely to accomplish it. This, we shall find will not be by the least indulgence; the first motives to anger must be checked, if we would root it from our breasts. And for this purpose, the most effectual way is to lay a great restraint on the tongue, and not suffer it to plead those reasons which are urged by passion. If we allow our passions to disturb nobody but ourselves, we shall be more solicitous to get the better of them, than if we sometimes use them as weapons against others; and those who take a frequent and serious review of their conduct, will have deeply to regret any circumstance in which they have suffered their minds to be inflamed, or been led to expressions which were contrary to the

meekness and quietness of spirit becoming all those who profess themselves Christians, and essentially necessary for such as wish to possess their souls in peace.

Every disturbance of the kind greatly unfits us for religious duties. The mind cannot readily compose itself after being much ruffled, and we seldom regain tranquillity but by the door of repentance. In our intercourse with others, a degree of conscious shame must fill every mind not lost to sensibility, from the consideration of errors it has committed; and these are feelings that can never be experienced without pain. In short, every thing seems to urge us to acquire entire command over ourselves; every view, both for time and eternity, warns us of the necessity of attaining this calm tranquillity. We must guard against committing faults, if we would avoid the sorrow of repentance; and by keeping a constant watch over every suggestion of our own minds, we shall not only receive strength to resist temptations to impropriety of outward conduct, but in due time be enabled to overcome every secret sin. But if, because we find we cannot at present command our minds, we neglect to pay a strict attention to our outward conduct, we shall be daily losing ground,

and omitting many little conquests which were within our power; the strength of our enemy will increase as our own diminishes, and we shall be in danger of being vanquished instead of becoming conquerors.

25th, 12th M°.—Suffer us to beseech thee, O Lord, more and more to enlighten us with divine knowledge, and having made us sensible of thy will, enable us to obey it.

Increase our faith, O Lord, that we may firmly rely on thy goodness and thy power, and rest in full assurance that a sincere endeavour to please thee will not be in vain. Bring down every proud thought and lofty imagination, and effectually convince us, that all our powers and faculties are thy gift, and must be devoted to thy service. Lead us to true humility and self-abasement, that we may approach the throne of thy infinite Majesty with awful reverence and fear; and wholly depending on thee, implore thy compassionate regard, and that thou wouldst be pleased to afford us strength to come up in the discharge of those duties which thou requirest. Thus, O Lord, may we, to the best of our abilities, glorify thee whilst here on earth, and receive such evidences of acceptance with thee, as will give a well-

grounded hope of being admitted into thy presence hereafter.

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8th, 1st M°.—We are sometimes tempted to complain of the shortness of time, whilst yet we feel various portions of it hang heavy on our hands. When oppressed with languor or sickness, or our minds discomposed by any occurrences, we wish hastily to pass over that period, or even strike it from our allotted time of existence. These sensations will gain great strength in the minds of those who are ardently engaged in the pursuit of terrestrial happiness; they are disposed to repine at every thing that gives a check to their present enjoyments, and murmur at the dispensations of that Being, who has seen meet, in his infinite wisdom, so to order things here, as may convince us that this is not the place of our rest, and engage us to look forward to a station of more durable happiness.

Every temporal pursuit is liable to disappointment; and if we gain the object of our wishes, we frequently find that it adds nothing to our real felicity.

The endeavour to acquire a great fund of

knowledge, which seems as rational an amusement as any in which the human mind can be engaged, is attended with the same mortifications, and too often proceeds from immoderate vanity, and a desire to be crowned with those laurels, which are of no use to the wearer.

If we consider the end of deep learning and extensive knowledge, of what benefit in general are they to the possessor, or others? The researches of some into natural things may have benefitted mankind, with regard to their present state of existence; but if we were able to speak of things, "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," and "of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes,"* we should, at last, be brought to the conclusion of him, whose wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and of Egypt; and that all beneath the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit.

I once greatly thirsted after knowledge, and mean not now to discard it as entirely useless; but I would bring it to that state of subordination, which is its proper place, and carefully remember those expressions of

*I Kings, iv. 33.

the Apostle, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."* When the mind is deeply engaged in study, we are too apt to neglect many of the duties of life, and are elevated with the thoughts of our own importance; but the love of God diffusing itself over the soul, engages us to walk before him in humility and fear, desirous that all our actions may be well pleasing in his sight.

When we feel this love strongly implanted in our breasts, and consider ourselves as beings who may shortly be called from this state of existence, to be placed either in eternal happiness or misery, we can no longer look with strong desires after any temporal attainment, and shall count every thing but as dross, in comparison of winning Christ, through whom alone we can gain an establishment in divine favour. This is the pearl of great price, which it is worth while to sell all to obtain; this, the one thing needful, which will stand us in stead, when all the pomps and vanities of this world shall come to an end.

The prospect of a glorious futurity enables us to pass, with calmness, through the various conflicts of time. While we consider this as only a state of probation, through

* I Cor. viii. 1.

which we must pass, to arrive at durable happiness, it lessens the disposition to murmur or complain; we can bear with fortitude the shocks of adversity, and are not elevated by prosperity, but are rather engaged in fervent desires that all may work together for good; and that our souls may be so purified, as to be fitted for celestial habitations.

26th, 1*st M°*.—We should not too hastily attribute that to neglect, or want of affection, which may proceed from other causes; there may be secret springs of action, to which we cannot penetrate, and we shall only add to our own disquiet, by expecting too much from our friends. Vexation and disappointment seem united to every thing earthly. There is no stability in any human enjoyments, and some bitter seems mingled with almost every sweet. These reflections should not lead us to discontent at our present situation; but rather to seek diligently an establishment in righteousness, that we may be made partakers of a glorious immortality.

There are times, in which we feel that nothing here is capable of satisfying an immortal soul; in which even the most rational and pleasing enjoyments lose their relish,

and we can derive comfort from nothing but a sense of the Divine favour. It is, I believe, the experience of many of us, that afflictions and mortifications tend to increase this hunger and thirst after spiritual food. This should lead us to patient resignation under every trial, and to acquiesce in every thing that may be a divine appointment.

If we seem left without any human friend, yet, we have a never-failing one in the Supreme Being, who sometimes sees meet to deprive us of this world's comforts and consolations, that we may be drawn nearer to himself, and place our dependance wholly and solely on him. Let us rather look with an eye of faith towards him, believing that all things will work together for good to those who sincerely love him, than indulge a disposition to repine at any of his dispensations.

Things which appear to our present unhappiness and disadvantage, have frequently at a future period proved a benefit, and we have been led to acknowledge that the Lord only knows what is best for us. These considerations of our weakness and incapacity, afford an instructive lesson of humility, and should engage us to put up fervent suppli-

cations to the Most High, Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done!

3d day, evening.—What a melancholy event is the departure of A. G.! Such a flower nipped in the height of its bloom, hurried off with rapidity from a state of health and strength, seems to strike us with the most forcible impression. The aged and the infirm leave the stage of life comparatively unnoticed; their departure was expected: but here we seem struck with the thought, that the same quick transition, from time to eternity, may be next our portion; and how we are prepared for that awful period, is a consideration that naturally takes place in every reflecting mind. We can often look with calmness on death at a distance, whilst we yet shudder at its near approach. Too often these warnings are but like a transient shower; they soften for a short time, and then our hearts return again to their former negligence and insensibility. The cry of Lord, Lord! the desire to be prepared is soon uttered; but to come up in obedience to his will, and walk with that care and circumspection which is necessary; this is the task hard to be performed; the warfare which

we have need to pray for strength to accomplish.

28*th*, 4*th* M°.—As I was meditating on various subjects, my mind was led to reflect on the happiness of that soul whose dependance is upon God, and who, walking before him with integrity, can look with confidence towards the mountain of his holiness. A calm seems to cover the mind, while treading in the path of simple obedience, beyond what words can express; it enjoys that serenity which diffuses itself in measure on every thing surrounding it, and contemplating the Author of all good, ascends towards his presence with the incense of grateful praise.

How little are these sensations experienced by those whose minds are perplexed with doubt; who, from endeavouring to penetrate into things beyond their depth, and searching into mysteries not designed to be revealed to the human understanding, lose themselves in the labyrinth of uncertainty; and yet, puffed up with their acquirements in human wisdom, cannot return to a child-like state, and submit to be guided by that principle, which too often appears contemptible in their eyes! O, human wisdom, how little art thou worth, when put in competition with that

divine Wisdom which leads to purity and peace!

Preserve me, O Lord, in humble fear before thee, is the frequent petition of my soul. Let me not be tempted to transgress thy law, by an improper thirst after the tree of knowledge; but considering my own weak state, and the necessity of thy guidance and protection, without impertinent inquiries into the reason why things are so, or so, endeavour to make obedience my first object, and to walk in thy commandments, the delight of my soul.

7th, 7th M°.—At meeting this morning we were much disturbed by a friend not in unity as a minister, who would not be persuaded to keep silence. As his moral character is good, the circumstance led me to reflect on the danger of being deluded by false appearances, and the necessity of keeping in an humble frame of mind.

What did Peter's great confidence in his own strength do for him? It saved him not from most shamefully denying his Lord and Master, after all his assurances to the contrary. His fall should be a caution to us; and not only so, but considering how liable we are to be deceived in our opinions of

ourselves, should lead us to caution and distrust, and a disposition to submit our own judgment to that of others, in what concerns them as well as ourselves. Meekness and humility are characteristics of the disciples of Christ; and great confidence in the propriety of our own conduct, and persuasion that we are above the reproof of men, are sure signs of our being in a very dangerous state, if not already entangled in the snares which Satan has been laying to catch our souls.

Those who are acting on a right foundation, will be rather inclined patiently to submit their cause to God, than enter into the spirit of opposition; not doubting, that if he has really called them into service, he will, in due time, cause his witness to reach the hearts of those who now oppose them.

8*th*, 7*th* M°. [*Extract from a letter*].—Many reflections arose in my mind on reading my dear ——'s last kind favour. Her sentiments have since been subjects for meditation, particularly concerning human knowledge, which, in its various branches, might occupy an unreasonable portion of our time. If we look only on another world, every thing may be deemed useless, which does not tend to

prepare us for that eternal abode. But when I consider the various beauties of creation, and the many blessings we enjoy whilst here, it rather gives room to believe that we may be permitted to gather some flowers in our way, and amuse ourselves with their beauty and fragrancy, so long as we keep the end of our journey in view, and consider *that* as what ought to be the principal object of our attention. In this light I have considered every walk into the fields of natural knowledge, and I believe that the discoveries made therein have been sometimes beneficial to our present state, as well as kept the youthful mind from temptations, which would have had a more pernicious influence.

Speculations on the mysterious government and providence of God, I have ever considered as much more dangerous; frequently productive of scepticism, and a loss of that faith, which is as an anchor to the soul, supporting it under all the vicissitudes of this present life, and animating it with the glorious hope of a happy immortality. From whatever source may have been the origin of evil, or for whatever end it may have been permitted by Him who has all power, I firmly believe were not designed to be the objects of our inquiry; and, however some specu-

lative minds may be buried in these things, yet observation may convince us, that they diminish, rather than add to their happiness, make them in general less fitted for social life, and sometimes worse than useless members of society.

There is not a doubt with me, that our felicity both here and hereafter will be increased, by regulating our conduct according to that revelation which Infinite Wisdom has thought fit to communicate, without perplexing our minds about that which is sealed mystery, and which must remain so, in spite of all our endeavours to unfold it.

Those internal feelings of the mind which lead us to a sensibility of His goodness, and the near communion we may have with the Author of our being, are more desirable than the acquirement of all knowledge; and I have frequently been inclined to adopt the language of one of our ministers, when speaking on similar subjects, "If this be enthusiasm, it is such an enthusiasm as I wish to feel." To arrive at this happy sensibility, nothing can be too dear to part with: all that we have, or can have, it is worth our while to give for the purchase of this inward peace; an assurance that we dwell near our Maker, and are the objects of his regard;

for, to dwell near Him, implies a state of the most exalted felicity.

Whilst we believe in the operation of His power on our minds, we shall act inconsistently in not readily giving up any thing he may require at our hands. Obedience, in small things, is more acceptable than a larger offering according to our own wills; and if he sees our affections particularly engaged in that which may be otherwise innocent, I believe he frequently requires the sacrifice of it, at the same time that it may be allowed to other individuals. The difference of dispositions makes the path necessarily narrower for some, than others; some tempers are so untractable, that they require a very tight rein, whilst others may, without prejudice, be allowed more liberty.

I cannot quite agree with thee in thy application of the text concerning Zaccheus, though I know many of our friends have taken it in the same light. From the simple narration, I see no room to draw an inference of any particular height of mind; he seemed guided by the impulse of curiosity solely, when he ran before, and climbed the sycamore tree; and as his design was only to see and know our Lord, it required no hesitation to obey the call of coming down immediately,

when he found he should have so much better opportunity of being gratified by his intending to become his guest. I may be wrong in my apprehensions, or not sink deep enough into the text; but this interpretation no way invalidates the argument for the necessity of humility, and coming down from every aspiring thought, before we can be fit to receive the Saviour of mankind.

I hardly know what to think of thy opinion respecting the equality of the sexes. Though male and female are all one, in respect to the gifts of the spirit, and their entrance into futurity, yet a degree of subordination while here, seems strongly enforced; and, considering the different stations we have to fill up in life, may tend to the greater union of the whole body, and be more for our edification, if we do but act with propriety in our different allotments. The word *obey* sounds harsh, but I believe it is a duty on our part, in every thing where a higher command does not interfere; and if we began to look on the men as our equals, rather than superiors, we should find a much stronger repugnance in ourselves to the fulfilling this precept. Too many of us want to learn a submission of will, and to be governed by that meek and

quiet spirit which the apostle Peter recommends as the proper adornment of a woman.

12*th*, 7*th* M°.—Whilst at meeting this morning, and much buried in a variety of earthly thoughts, the call of (I think I may say) a deeply baptized minister, seemed to rouse me from my lethargy, by desiring us to take a retrospective view of ourselves, and consider the situation of our minds, in the day of our first espousals. The doctrine seemed to come home to myself; and a painful review passed my mind. Oh, the prevalence of earthly things, was the secret cry of my soul, accompanied with sincere desires to be delivered from this bondage, and again illuminated with a ray of that divine light which once shone with more distinguished lustre.

A progress in spiritual things can only be witnessed by steady adherence to this light; and we must not sluggishly lie still, in expectation of having our fetters broken, but exert that strength which is afforded us, to gain our own releasement from the snares of sin and Satan; in which state of conflict we shall not fail to receive such assistance as will enable us entirely to overcome.

The world has got too strong hold of us as a people, as well as others. We are deeply buried in the earth, and earthly concerns; and though some of us may have broken the more obvious fetters of sin and Satan, yet we cannot sufficiently withdraw from temporal things, but bestow an improper portion of our time in the various cares and pursuits in which Martha was engaged; neglecting first to seek the one thing needful, and repose our confidence in God, trusting that all others necessary for us will be added.

But much of this faith is wanting. We busy ourselves beside the proper business, and are anxious about that which is very little in our own power. Oh, how I long to be redeemed from this slavery, and experience that glorious liberty which makes free indeed!

3d, 9th M°.—In the hours of serious meditation, I am often led to reflect on the necessity there is for us to keep a constant guard over ourselves, and pray that we may receive strength to resist the many temptations that are daily occurring, in the common course of our lives.

We are frequently overcome by trifling

temptations, when those that appear more powerful have been presented without effect. Whence can this arise, but from a want of that watchfulness which we have seen to be necessary on more important occasions? In a state of ease and tranquillity, we sometimes too readily conclude that we can withstand this or the other assault; but if we consider how often we have been vanquished in small skirmishes, or taken by surprise by the enemy, it would lead us to great distrust of ourselves, and to keep a vigilant watch against every attack. My own experience daily convinces me more and more of the necessity of this constant watchfulness.

If we look only at the gloomy side of things, we shall be in great danger of being soured by discontent: all that partake of life, must partake of its various draughts; and the bitter as well as sweet must be their mingled portion. Let us rather then, receive with thankfulness those blessings with which we are favoured, than repine at the want of some comforts which Providence has seen meet to withhold. We have most of us cause to put the query to ourselves, "How much owest thou to my Lord?"* We may trace his abundant goodness, notwithstand-

* Luke, xvi. 5.

ing our own unworthiness and manifold transgressions, and with the sense of unmerited favours, have cause for being bowed in reverent, awful thankfulness, desiring to render the tribute of a grateful heart. More and more, O Lord, impress me with these humbling sensations. Let me reflect how much thou hast bestowed, and how little I deserve, and with the sense of the many obligations I am under to thee, enable me to walk before thee in filial love and fear.

13*th*, 9*th M°*.—"Unto the pure, all things are pure."* As this text has much dwelt on my mind, I have been led to consider the necessity of inward purity, and the great happiness attending such a state. It would save us much trouble and anxiety about many trifling events which now greatly discompose us; and we should feel that serenity of mind which arises from a consciousness of endeavouring to have our thoughts, as well as actions, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. Here we find solid satisfaction; and though sorrow may be our portion, from outward circumstances, yet can we rejoice under a sense of divine favour. If we rightly considered, we should find it well worth our

* Titus, i. 15.

while to endeavour after this inward purity. While discord reigns within, and various passions are rising in our breasts, an outward harmony of conduct can hardly be preserved; but if the inside be clean, the outside will be clean also. If we sincerely desired to please God, we should be as solicitous to keep our thoughts unpolluted, as we are to preserve a fair outside to the world; knowing that his eye searches the most secret recesses, and that he beholds, with displeasure, every thing that is impure. Whilst we are sincerely aspiring after rectitude, and keeping our eye single to the Lord, we can look with confidence towards him under every dispensation, and shall receive strength to support, with patience and fortitude, any trials we may have to encounter. But if we are indulging a vain imagination, or giving way to that which we perceive to be contrary to the manifestations of truth, we lose that hope which is as an anchor to the soul, and have to tread in the paths of lamentation and woe.

1777.

14*th*, 1*st M°*.—"EXCEPT a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

This text has given rise to various sentiments and conjectures, some of which have had no happy influence on the mind.

A few thoughts occur to me, on the impropriety of supposing (as many have done) that regeneration is an instantaneous work, of which we are sensible at the time; and from a state of death and darkness, feel ourselves translated into the kingdom of life and light, born of that incorruptible seed which is to inherit the promise.

By the fall of Adam, we lost that glorious state in which we were at first created; but through a Redeemer we may be restored again to happiness and glory. Now, as our Lawgiver has thought proper to compare this restoration to a second birth, I have been led to consider that, according to his simile, it is impossible we should be instantaneously sensible of it, as some have imagined. With regard to the natural life, we find that we are born, but we neither know when nor how; we feel that we have got a little strength, be-

* John, iii. 3.

fore we begin to consider what we are. May we not suppose it so, spiritually? We feel something within us of a spiritual nature; but we at first scarcely know what it is, or how it came there. If we treat it properly, it will, like our natural bodies, increase in strength; but if otherwise, it will never thrive; and though it cannot totally die, that is, be annihilated, yet it will be separated from the Divine life; which separation constitutes the death of the soul.

From the supposition that the new birth is some sensible impression on the mind, at a particular time, we may be led to a hasty conclusion, that we are in a justified state, from feeling some tender emotions, or a warmth of spirit, whilst we still remain unsanctified, and have not passed through the many dippings in Jordan, which are necessary to purify the soul. But this sudden transition from death to life, is an easy way of salvation; therefore, no wonder if it captivate the unwary mind. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* This seems to me to imply, that as, by the fall of Adam, we lost our union with the Divine nature, and consequently our state of happiness and glory, so, through

* I Cor. xv. 22.

Christ, each individual has the seed of life again sown in the heart, by faith in, and obedience to which we shall be again restored to a happy immortality.

I believe, many are witnesses of the power of this new birth, who yet as to outward knowledge, understand little about it; they would hardly be sensible what was meant by conversation on the subject. But the speculative frequently perplex themselves with words; and endeavouring to explain the manner of the operation of a divine influence, neglect retiring, in the silence of all flesh, to that inspeaking word, which can alone unfold the mysteries of a heavenly kingdom.

The wayfaring man and the fool, who probably find neither time nor inclination for deep studies, need not err in the path to happiness; because, by a simple obedience to the leadings of a divine principle, which they inwardly experience, they are drawn nearer and nearer to the fountain of light, and thus, by faith in this power, they become more and more enlightened, and increasing in holiness and virtue, are made fit to be translated to an inheritance incorruptible.

1*st*, 2*d* M°.—O Lord, am I a sheep of thy

pasture? How shall I know thy voice? This is the frequent language of my soul, when thirsting after God.

O Shepherd of Israel, let me not be deceived. Thou hast said, "My sheep hear my voice,"* and "they know not the voice of strangers."† O Lord, take me under thy protection, and guard me from all the subtile devices of the enemy.

There are seasons, when the soul seems deeply humbled before God, and earnestly desirous to gain an incorruptible inheritance; when all the glory of this world becomes faded in its view, and it seems only desirous of inquiring, who shall show us any good? "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."‡ This will chase away the gloom from our minds; we shall see ourselves clearly through the ray of thy divine light, and knowing *that* to be the only sure guide, shall press forward, through a hope that maketh not ashamed. Lord, let thy light shine more and more clearly in my heart. Let it plainly make manifest what I ought to do, and what to leave undone; and so strengthen me to come up in obedience, that it may shine brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day. And thus, walking in hum-

* John, x. 27. † John, x. 5. ‡ Psalm iv. 6.

ble fear and dependance on thee, grant, if it be thy holy will, such an evidence that it is thy voice, as may stay my soul with confidence on thee, and that it may no more be in danger of being blown about with every wind of doctrine. O Lord, sensible that I am nothing, and that I can be nothing without thee, I am earnestly engaged to solicit thy favour. Cast not off, I beseech thee, the workmanship of thy hands; but so lead me, and strengthen me in the performance of that which is acceptable in thy sight, that I may grow up as a plant of thy right hand planting; and when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, be received into a mansion in thine house.

9th, 2d M°.—It is much easier to run well for a time, than steadily to persevere in the path of holiness and virtue; yet transient goodness avails but little, since it is only they that hold on to the end, that shall be saved. I am often led to take a secret review of myself, and, from my own feelings, am brought to acknowledge the truth of the above proposition. After having kept a pretty vigilant watch, and endeavoured to walk with care and circumspection, the mind sometimes begins to grow weary; it expected

to find an early day of rest, and is disappointed, and is almost ready to cry out, I have "toiled all the night, and taken nothing."* The enemy of our soul's happiness is ever ready to present temptations, and our own corrupt nature is too apt to fall in with them. We grow tired of a patient waiting; we want to be released from our station of watching, and to reap some profit of our labours. Here the soul too frequently falls from its holy vigilance; revolts from that government to which it had in part submitted, and wants to become the servant of an easier master. But the terms can never be altered. They "that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."† We must submit to continue under the discipline of the cross, if ever we expect to receive the crown. It signifies not enlisting ourselves under the banners of Christ, unless we determine to fight till the warfare is accomplished; deserters will not find an entrance with him into the promised land. "Let us not," then, "grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."‡ Let this consolatory thought prevail over every secret murmur; let us return to our station of a holy vigi-

* Luke, v. 5. † Mat. xxiv 13. Mark, xiii. 13.
‡ Gal. vi. 9.

lance of soul. Having once stepped aside, we are in danger of being drawn swiftly backwards, step by step, till at last we shall not be able to find the way to return.

4th, 3d M°. [*Extract from a letter.*]—I am now sitting with my dear little cares, watching them in their evening's repose. They (as thou justly observest) attach us strongly to life; and without a guard over ourselves, we are in danger of centering too much of our happiness in them. They may, indeed, in various ways, be deemed uncertain blessings; their lives are very precarious, and their future conduct proving as one could wish, not less doubtful. I already often look forward with anxiety, and the most ardent wishes for their welfare, in a state of permanent felicity. They are now pretty playthings, and pleasing calls of attention, and should be received with grateful hearts, as additions to our present comfort; but we should consider, that they may be blessings only lent for a time.

We are so incapable of judging, with regard to our own happiness, or that of others, that it should lead us to a patient acquiescence in the Divine will; a resignation which would not only enable us to say, "Thy

will be done," but to feel that submission of mind which would preserve us in calm composure.

With regard to ——, there seems room for the most consolatory thoughts. Though it may be exceedingly afflicting to be deprived of two amiable daughters, in the prime of life, whose company, she had probably flattered herself, would soothe her declining years, or support her in the hour of sickness or distress; yet, let us view them in scenes of futurity, centered in everlasting bliss; consider the many evils they have escaped, and the resignation and composure with which they quitted every thing here: this should calm every tumultuous thought, and prevent every wish but that we may join them as soon as our work is accomplished, and we are fitted for the same happiness and glory.

It requires a very close and diligent search, to find out the true motives of action, and the different snares and subtilties which the enemy makes use of to entangle our minds, and, by degrees, draw us from the simplicity of truth. I have so often been led away by his deceptions, in unguarded moments, that it has brought me to great distrust of

myself, and ardent desires have been raised in my soul towards Him who has all power, that I might be preserved in the safe path of humility and fear. But this meek and lowly frame of mind, which would make us willing to become as nothing in the eyes of the world, yea, rejected and despised by many who are deeply centered in earthly wisdom, is very hard to be obtained; and though we are sometimes favoured to see the noxious influence of the root of pride, and how much it tends to corrupt and hinder the growth of the good seed, yet we very unwillingly submit to the painful operation of having it entirely dug out, and too frequently rest satisfied with only lopping off its branches, and slightly covering it over, not considering how soon fresh branches will shoot forth, and flourish with increasing strength.

I heard read, with satisfaction, the sermon thou mentionest of S. F. How few are there qualified to fill the station of that excellent man! Free from narrowness of sentiment, he sought the good of all, and his mind seemed covered with that universal benevolence that gained him general love and esteem. Indeed, I believe, the more we feel the influence of the love of God on our own souls, the more powerfully it extends to

others; and we long that they also may partake of his mercy and goodness, and be admitted to his solemn feasts. I never feel myself happier than when this holy love has overspread my soul. Here, all jealousies and heart-burnings are at an end. We no longer feel anger at the opposition, or contradictory sentiments of others, but would gather all under the wing of divine compassion, and receive the returning prodigal with unfeigned joy. Here, the various unruly passions seem entirely stilled, and the enemy of our soul's happiness is chained beneath our feet.

This, in our individual experience, bears a resemblance to the situation of that holy mountain, where nothing can hurt or destroy, and affords a satisfaction higher than can be derived from the increase of corn, wine, and oil. But, surely, this happy state of mind may be esteemed as one of the festival days of Zion. Our various necessary engagements of life subject us to almost continued scenes of temptation; the lion and the lamb are not, at present, to lie down together; and though we may at times be allowed seasons of refreshment, and some tastes of the pure water of life, yet we are not to think of taking up our rest, but press forward with fresh vigour

to the end of our race. Too many have been inclined to sit down at ease, after feeling the secret drawings of Divine Power; but if we expect to receive the crown at last, a holy vigilance must accompany our minds to the end of time; and we must not flatter ourselves that our warfare is accomplished, till a final period be put to our present state of existence.

24th, 8th M°.—"Days should speak, and a multitude of years teach wisdom."* Alas, what profit have I gained by added years, or how have they instructed me in the line of experience? It is true, they make me more and more sensible of my own weakness; they convince me of the vanity of the search after temporal happiness, and how little able I am to form a true judgment of what will be most conducive to it. But they have not yet taught me to bear with proper fortitude, the disappointments and vexations that are incident to human life.

Troubles, in a greater or less degree, are the lot of every one; but we often think our own share particularly grievous, though, perhaps, a trial would convince us, that the

* Job, xxxii. 7.

burdens of others would be less supportable than our own. I perceive, with regret, that I am too much discomposed by those things which may be looked upon as little evils; and cannot sufficiently fix my mind on permanent enjoyments, to support the various dispensations of this life with the tranquillity I ought. Aid me and assist me, O all-powerful Lord God; enable me, I beseech thee, to cast my dependance wholly on thee; and strengthen me to support, with propriety, the conflicts which thy wisdom shall see meet to appoint. Bring down every proud thought, and every lofty look, and so humble me under the operation of thy power, that I may bow, in deep contrition, at the footstool of thy throne. Thus, O gracious Father, let me become the object of thy merciful and compassionate regard, and so follow the footsteps of my Redeemer in the path of meekness and humility, as that the work of purification may go forward, and that I may live to thy praise. Thou hast brought me to acknowledge that all power is thine, and that I have no strength or sufficiency but as derived from thee. More and more strongly impress this sense, O Lord; and enable me to confess, from the very bottom of my soul,

that "thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory," and that thou alone art worthy for ever. Amen.

1778.

[*Birth of a child.*] *22d, 2d M°.*—What shall I render unto thee for all thy mercies? has been the frequent language of my heart. Melt my soul, O Lord, under the sense of unmerited favours, and yet add to thy various other blessings, that of a humble and contrite spirit.

23d.—Amidst the variety of attachments to earth, it is very difficult to withdraw the mind from them, and fix it with proper attention on the concerns of another world. We are very apt to think, that *this*, or the *other* period of time, will afford better opportunity for reflection, and thus let the present moment fly from us unimproved. Continued experience of this should teach us to be on our guard, and not look forward to a future time, which, if it should arrive, will bring with it its proportion of care. Acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace. This early acquaintance with God, and humble walking in his fear, will preserve us from

many of the snares and entanglements that are laid to catch our steps, and we shall be enabled to press forward through the crowds of opposition, to an "inheritance incorruptible," and "that fadeth not away."*

1*st*, 3*d M°*.—Great comfort arises from an habitual turning of the mind to God, and looking with calm composure on every event of this life, considering them as guided by his providence, and that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Heavenly Father. But the blessings we are favoured with are apt to engross our attention: we centre in them, without sufficiently considering the Giver with gratitude and praise, and neglecting to walk in humble dependance upon him, and submission to his will, are unprepared for those afflictions which are necessary to rouse the soul. Wisdom is most commonly learned in the school of adversity; and there are few that make the needful improvement in the calm and unruffled scenes of a prosperous life.

6*th*, 3*d M°*.—The time and the disposition to meditate are often at variance. When engaged in necessary employment, we fre-

* I Peter, i. 4.

quently think we could retire to profitable meditation; but when the hours of retirement come, how often have we cause to lament that our minds are not in a suitable frame to make the right improvement of such time!

This should convince us of the folly of indulging vain fancies, that we should have more opportunity to profit, if *this*, or the *other* thing in life were different from what it is; since the best we can do, is to make the best use of the present time, according to our ability, and rest assured, that whatever situation we are in, it is such as is adapted for us to work out the salvation of our souls. The same circumstances and employments are not alike suited to every disposition, and by vainly thinking what we would do in the place of others, we sometimes neglect the duties allotted to our own sphere.

The Lord, who sees the heart, and all the inmost recesses of our souls, sees likewise the true motives for every action; and if we sincerely desire to do that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and err only from fear of our own weakness and inability, or, Gideon-like, desire to prove the fleece various ways, no doubt he will behold us with a compassionate eye, and so teach us to war, as that, in the

confidence of his assisting power, we shall not fail to overcome.

[*Extract from a letter.*] *9th, 7th M°.*—Anxiety of mind has a great influence on the body in which it is enclosed; they are very nearly connected, whilst in this state of existence; and I have often thought, that weakness and infirmity, like anxiety and sorrow, have a great effect on minds properly disposed, to bring them to that true humility and resignation which gain admittance to the footstool of the divine Instructor, who not only condescends to lead us in the right path, but likewise pours the balm of consolation into our wounded souls.

When we cast an eye on the afflictions of others, it brings us to the inquiry, what are we, that we should be so far exempt, or our portion of bitterness less than theirs? It seems humiliating to reflect on our unworthiness of the many favours bestowed, and should quicken our diligence in seeking treasures more durable than this world can afford; lest our blessings should become a snare, and encourage us in a false rest. Prosperity, as well as adversity, is a trial of our faith; and I believe many are preserved in the latter, who would take their flight if surrounded

with the pleasures of a deceitful world. In all situations it is essentially necessary to keep low in the valley of humility, and I am fully persuaded, adds much to our happiness while here, whatever may be our portion. But self is ever ready to exalt itself, and get uppermost upon every occasion, not sufficiently considering that all excellences of body or mind are not at our command, but both subject to be invaded by disease, and may be taken from us in a moment.

4th, 10*th M°*.—We too often seek to cover our failings by plausible pretences, and neglect that close searching of heart, which would unveil all our deformities. It is, indeed, very humiliating to see ourselves as we really are; but let us consider how much more dreadful it will be, to be exposed to the view of men and angels, when all the hidden things of darkness shall be revealed. Lord, search me, and purify me, must be the language of every soul, while under these painful apprehensions. We see the workings of evil under many a plausible appearance; let us learn to distrust ourselves in all, and walk in humility and fear.

"The heart is deceitful, above all things," "who can know it? I, the Lord, search the

heart, I try the reins."* Search me, O God, and make me willing to know myself. I long to be in a state of purity, the only state of acceptance with thee. But how hard are the terms! Every external conformity seems as nothing in comparison of this inward purification of soul. Many of us are willing to walk with a degree of circumspection, who yet know not how to bear the furnace which is necessary to purge away all the dross. We would gladly find an excuse for such, or such a disposition, or allowance of some indulgence of resentment, for such, or such a provocation; thus seeking a cover for some of the old roots of evil, instead of digging them thoroughly out. Trials and mortifications frequently make us look deeper into ourselves than we otherwise should; but there is a strong inclination to avoid the secret discipline they would occasion.

This observation belongs peculiarly to those little trials, which are sometimes the result of, or are occasioned by, some degree of perverseness in our own wills. We see we have erred; but we like not to acknowledge it, even to ourselves, and are still more averse to have it exposed to the world. Here then, the consideration that we must one

* Jerem. xvii. 9, 10.

day appear as we really are, comes in with double force. Every serious thought seems to unite in raising desires really to become what we shall one day wish to be, spirits made pure, and fitted for a celestial kingdom.

1779.

21*st*, 3*d M°*.—Our friends sometimes draw comparisons between our Society and the children of Israel, or enforce things upon us by their example. Israel must dwell alone; therefore we must dwell alone. This method of reasoning seems not quite applicable to the present state of things, and rather carries the appearance of this pharisaical language —Stand off, "I am holier than thou."*

The children of Israel were peculiarly under the immediate guidance of Providence: the only family on the face of the earth (that we read of) to whom Jehovah openly revealed himself, enjoined them particular rites and ceremonies, and strictly forbade their communication with other nations.

The Christian dispensation breathes a very different language; we are all to look on one another as brethren, children of one common Father, and equally under his pro-

* Isaiah, lxv. 5.

tection. It is true, that the manifestations of his light are still very different. The glorious truths of the Gospel are revealed only to a few, and sometimes, where they are in degree known, with great obscurity. Yet the Christian cannot say to the Mahometan, I am better than thou: let him rather query, if I have more light, do I walk consistently therewith? Under the name of Christians, there are various sects; each thinks itself in the right; and under this persuasion may, with equal propriety, compare itself to the children of Israel, and judge itself peculiarly favoured.

The above sentiments are not written to contradict the suitableness of enforcing the advice to withdraw from the world, and in great measure dwell alone; because we are sensible that the world lies in wickedness, and that the love of it is enmity with God. But though our profession is high, we have but little cause to impute any peculiar goodness to our own sect; too many of us are joined to the world, or make a part of that world which we condemn, and which may be as likely to lead us astray from the true fold, as many of other sects. The more we associate with religious people, the better; and I would plead for keeping our commu-

nications, as much as can conveniently be, within our own society. I believe, (notwithstanding the above remark, that we have but little room to boast,) that there are more of us much farther advanced in true religion and goodness, than any other society can claim in the same proportion; and whilst we associate with them, we are out of the way of many temptations, to which, with other societies, from their greater allowance of liberty, we should be exposed. But, however good a thing may be, I am not for having it enforced by any principles that will not bear the test: there are arguments sufficient to support a good cause, without bringing in any weak ones to defend it.

5th, 9th M°.—I have often cause to lament the difficulty I find in keeping my mind in a retired frame when at meeting. It is too much like the inn, crowded with guests, where there is no room for the manifestations of that Power which can alone give life, and quicken for the true spiritual worship. Under these considerations, I have sometimes been led to contemplate the satisfaction arising from that worship which can be performed in our own will and time, consisting in outward forms, which necessarily engage

the attention. The mind that can believe such offerings right and acceptable in the sight of God, can return from them with a degree of confidence, in the comfortable persuasion of having done its duty; while we, who see the necessity of that awful, spiritual worship, which can be performed only through the assistance of the Spirit, have frequently to return from our solemnities, humbled under the sense that we have performed no worship, and have to lament our weakness and incapacity, time after time.

In this state, the pride of man is laid as in the dust; he feels his dependance upon God, and benefits by his humiliation: he cannot exalt himself like the Pharisee, he must mourn with the publican. And though he may have no gross sins to charge himself with, yet he sees that he is nothing, and can do nothing, but through the assistance of Him who has all power; and is therefore convinced of the necessity of waiting, in lowliness and self-abasement, for the arising of that pure spirit, which can sanctify the heart, and prepare an acceptable offering in his own time.

9th, 11*th M°*.—When I have been disposed to excuse myself, or justify my conduct, in

indulging dissatisfaction at things that were unpleasant or mortifying, I have sometimes set before me the character of persons I esteem as being truly religious, and governed by Christian meekness, and queried whether they would give way to such tempers, from such provocations. The answer has been in the negative; I could not suppose that they would: when I have beheld their conduct, I have had reason to conclude that they were too much redeemed from the world, to be materially discomposed at little cross events; their eyes were fixed on a better country for complete happiness, and they were looking towards it, with the faith that would enable them to bear and forbear. It seems foreign to a meek and quiet spirit to be displeased at slight offences and neglects; it expects and looks for but little; it is therefore less likely to be disappointed.

But proud *self*, that seeks principally its own happiness, and cannot bear control, is feeding that fire with fuel, that must be put out. If, in the little things where *self* would fain justify, we cannot suppose a similar conduct in a character which we esteem; what stronger proof can we have of deserving condemnation, and acknowledging that we stand in need of more meekness and humility to

make us what we ought to be? Let us then be humbled under a sense of weakness, rather than endeavour to justify ourselves; and pray for strength to overcome all those tempers, which serve only to embitter life, and prevent our enjoyment of a meek and quiet spirit, which would add greatly to our happiness here, as well as hereafter.

[*Extract from a letter.*]—*7th*, 12*th M°.*—The thirst after happiness is so strongly rooted in our minds, that our impatience frequently leads us to the use of wrong means for accomplishing our desires. If we would but endeavour to bring our minds to be satisfied with things as they are, we should find it much easier than to alter the things themselves. But that self-love and self-exaltation, which so powerfully maintain their ground in our hearts, too strongly oppose the meekness and humility which should preside in their place, not to occasion a frequent war within us. This I feel to be my own case, and can therefore readily sympathise with those who endure the same conflicts. For some of us, I believe, many baptisms are necessary, before we can become thoroughly purified, and the furnace must be heated many times hotter than its usual heat. If this

should be our own case, let us endeavour to stand firm in faith, and patiently endure the turning of that hand upon us, which would purge away all our dross, and take away all our tin. For my own part, I see frequent need to pray that my faith fail not, and to rejoice in feeling the influence of that Spirit, through which alone we can cry, Abba, Father. But so much of the old leaven remains, as makes it generally a time of deep humiliation; though, with the comfortable assurance that Divine regard is still extended, and that he is yet willing, in his infinite mercy, to gather me into his fold of rest. The smooth and even path it has never been my lot to tread; though favoured with many blessings, (many more than I deserve doth my soul often acknowledge,) yet I have not been without a share of deep, inward conflicts; some of which may have arisen from a want of that true heavenly meekness of which others seem possessed. But how hard is that subjection of *self*, which can lay aside all the pleasures and glories of this fading world, and look upon every thing as dross and as dung, in comparison of Christ. Though my spirit breathes after it, I find it very difficult to attain; and am sometimes ready to fear that I am very little nearer to

the kingdom of Heaven than when I first began.

1780.

2d, 1*st M°*.—Faith is the gift of God. The more we know of ourselves, the more we are sensible that every good gift comes from him, and that we can neither do a good act, nor think a good thought, but as we are strengthened and assisted by the efficacious operation of his all-sufficient grace.

Here then, we might rest our dependance in every situation, if we could but consider that we had not rejected this grace, nor fallen by our own negligence and inattention: but how few can make this confession! We have all erred, and fallen short of that state in which we might have been placed, and remain subject to various corruptions of our nature, from which we might have been redeemed through grace.

Many visitations of Divine love remain still fresh in my memory, when, I think I may say, my heart has been humbled under the influence of divine power, and I have been ready to cry out, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. But how have these melting seasons passed away

as the morning dew! They have even been, after a time, succeeded by doubts, concerning the immediate operation of this invisible Power; and queries have arisen, does the Lord so condescend as to make each individual the object of his particular attention?

But, why these doubts? His power is beyond our comprehension, and we have reason to believe that he can see, at one glance, the inmost recesses of our souls, and, without trouble to himself, influence them at his pleasure.

To believe ourselves thus the objects of his regard, is a most comfortable faith. Oh that it might never fail! saith my soul, and that I might, with holy reverence, approach the footstool of His throne, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings, (much higher than our capacities can reach,) under a confidence that he is a God hearing prayer, and will be attentive to the cry of even us poor worms.

26*th*, 1*st M°*.—Notwithstanding we often see the benefit of the cross, yet we are very apt to flinch from it when it approaches. We acknowledge that it is good for us to be afflicted, but we would choose our own afflictions. We know that discipline is necessary, but we are disposed to point out the

time and manner of it for ourselves; vainly imagining that *this*, or the *other* trouble would be productive of more benefit than those which we at present feel. I have no doubt that ideas of this kind have place in more minds than my own; for there seems to be a strong propensity in our nature to acquiesce more cheerfully with the will of our Creator, in those calamities from which we can see that some benefit may arise, than where we can behold no probable good from our afflictions. But here, is a great failure of confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being; for if He, who can look into futurity, wills only the happiness of his creatures, we may rest assured that whatever happens to us is for the best, and that nothing can be more beneficial for us, than that which falls to our lot.

While we indulge the disposition of carving for ourselves, either what seems good or evil, we lose many advantages that might arise from making a proper use of our present situation. By giving way to such thoughts, we are in danger of getting, by degrees, to murmur against God, instead of receiving, with meekness and patience, whatever he may appoint. If we feel the corruption of our nature, and that the furnace is

necessary to purify it, let us rather cheerfully take up those crosses appointed for us to bear, than endeavour to flee from them; resting in the firm persuasion, that they are such as are best adapted to refine our souls; and whether they may be visible to the world, or confined only within our own knowledge, if we patiently bear, and make a proper use of them, they will be productive of a reward far exceeding all temporal gratifications.

13*th*, 2*d* M°.—"Without me, ye can do nothing."* If these words of our Saviour were deeply engraven on our minds, we should be induced to walk with great care and circumspection, humbly seeking that strength and advice which could alone enable us to act rightly. But we are too apt to walk forward in our own wisdom and our own strength, forgetting, that without Christ we can do nothing as we ought; by which neglect we are frequently brought to shame, and have to repent our inadvertence and misconduct. When we have thus sunk in our own esteem, and seriously consider our backslidings, we are led to mourn over ourselves, and are ready to make fresh cove-

* John, xv. 5.

nant with God, that if he will but release us from the burden of sin, and assist us through the difficulties into which our negligence has brought us, we will then ever look upon him as a God near at hand, and walk before him as obedient children. But, alas, how weak is our faith! The return of peace of mind, and a degree of outward ease, is too apt to make us again sit down in a state of negligence, forgetting him who is the Author of all our mercies, and who alone can preserve us in the hour of temptation.

O Lord, I beseech thee, increase my faith, and enable me to consider thee as a God always near at hand, and condescending to regard the poor children of men. Where I have erred, O Lord, enable me to mend, and to walk before thee in humility and simplicity of heart. Without thee, I see that I can do nothing; and, O, may this sense engage me to walk before thee in holy fear. I desire not to escape the discipline which thou seest necessary to purify my soul; let me rather pray that thy hand would not spare, nor thine eye pity, until thou hast brought forth judgment unto victory. Let the dread of being left of thee, stimulate me to walk in more perfect obedience, and without reasoning with flesh and blood, to give up in

simplicity to all thy requirings. This is the only path of safety and of peace. O Lord God, enable me to pursue it.

12*th*, 4*th* M°.—"In the world ye shall have tribulation,"* but in me, peace.

This clear prediction of our Saviour we often feel verified, yet can hardly submit to the idea, that it must ever remain to be the case.

When we feel the various struggles between nature and grace, and the many outward things that surround us to create disquietude, we are ready to adopt the sentiment, that "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."† But these thoughts are too gloomy, long to possess our minds. Even the religious would grow disqualified for the various allotments of life, if some present blessings were not interspersed, to cheer the melancholy scene, and revive them with hope. But we are apt to build castles in the air, and depend upon something, in future, to make us happier than we at present find ourselves. This is seeking for consolation where we shall never find it.

We must be content, while in this world, to inhabit with affliction, and yet not let

* John, xvi. 33. † Job, v. 7.

despondency prevail; but consider how many blessings are bestowed upon us, for which we ought to be thankful, rather than dwell on those ideal satisfactions, which Providence, in infinite wisdom, has not seen fit should be realised. This is too much the disposition of man, and is, probably, a source of greater unhappiness, than all the real sorrows that fall to his share. We should let the declaration, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," be so far impressed on our minds, that when it approaches, we may not sink under its weight, but may seek for our support and consolation from the promise, that in our Saviour we may have peace. Every thing in life is checquered, and affords no sure foundation to build upon; every thing around us not only speaks the language that "here we have no continuing city,"* but also, that this is only a state of probation, in which trials and afflictions are necessary to purify our souls. Why then, should we be cast down at the prospect before us, seeing we are but pilgrims and sojourners for a short time, travelling towards a better country, to seek durable happiness.

O my soul, be composed with this thought,

* Heb. xiii. 14.

and seek that peace in Christ which will still all the boisterous waves, and support thy frail and tottering bark along the stream of time.

A thirsting after some applause from men is too apt to prevail, even in religious minds; to gain it, is but to be puffed up with false glory, to increase the appetite for it, and fill our minds with ambition, instead of having them governed by heavenly meekness and Divine love.

Thus the fabric which was begun with the first sparks of emulation, and carried on by an increasing fondness for applause, must be entirely demolished. We must not only learn each man to "esteem other better than himself," but we must experience every root of bitterness and envy to be entirely eradicated, and the peaceable "fruits of righteousness" which comprehends Divine and universal love, substituted in their stead.

Here are the fruits of that new birth, which, though small in its beginnings, will, in time, leaven the whole lump. And as we feel this plant or heavenly seed to increase in growth, by which our minds become more and more enlightened, let us not endeavour to excuse

or justify our past conduct, but rectifying by degrees, as we go along, endeavour to increase in conformity to the Divine image; confessing that we have heretofore walked in corruption, and continue in part to do the same, though supported with faith that we shall one day be more than conquerors, through Him that loved us, and who can enable us to gain the victory over death, hell and the grave.

21*st*, 9*th* *M°*.—It is painful to observe how rarely we meet with a character of consistent goodness or propriety of conduct throughout. Some particular failings are apt to stamp the most eminent; and some natural passion unsubdued, gains an ascendancy over us that eclipses all our virtues. Such is the miserable constitution of the human frame, in its present fallen and degenerate state. But while we lament our depravity, let us reflect on the means of rising above it put into our power; and though we observe one falling, as it were, on our right hand, and another on our left, let us not give ourselves over for lost, as if we must necessarily share the same fate, but use double diligence, and pray fervently to Him who can guard every avenue of the heart, and assist us to walk forward

with safety through all the snares of the enemy.

I have sometimes thought that those who have been in part redeemed, and accustomed themselves to reflect on important things, have frequently been in danger of falling and coming under reproach, from inattention to lesser matters. Here the enemy of souls has found an entrance, and gained advantage where he would certainly have failed in more daring attempts. To be constantly on our guard and prepared for an attack, requires no small vigilance; and we are ready to shrink from such hard duty, as painful and laborious. But if we expect to be conquerors, we must endure the previous hardship and discipline which are necessary to qualify us for "valiant soldiers" in the cause of Christ.

There are many who would reap the fruits of victory, without going through the toil necessary to obtain it; and some who would be willing to exert themselves on extraordinary occasions, provided their general state might be that of ease and rest. But if we entertain any reasonable hope of enjoying permanent felicity when these earthly scenes are closed, it must be by an endeavour to arrive at that invariable uprightness of con-

duct which can result only from a strict adherence to the Divine principle and redeeming power, which can enable us to overcome all evil, and will lead us on, step by step, in little things as well as great, to such an exalted pitch of virtue, as to be brought to acknowledge that "all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."*

3d, 10th M°.—Our zeal and our faith are likely to bear a proportion to each other. A strong faith will be productive of a lively zeal, because there is a natural propensity in the human mind to be strenuous in supporting those truths or opinions in which we firmly believe. Both are dependant, in some measure, on the passions and dispositions of men. Some imaginations paint every thing in strong colours, whilst others are disposed to take up with less light and shade: the former disposition is apt to be accompanied with an over-confidence; and the latter to fall short of the excellence which might be attained.

From endeavouring to search into things beyond our depth, and giving way to doubts and perplexities, our minds become bewildered, and we may be in danger of getting

* Prov. iii. 17.

in time to doubt of essential truths. Hence must arise lukewarmness and indifference; since we cannot be zealous about that of which our own minds are not fully persuaded.

The man of strong faith and lively zeal will press forward through a thousand difficulties; but is in great danger of falling, from mistaking error for truth, unless his ardour be guided by a sound judgment, and he keep his mind open to the reproofs of instruction: for "he that believeth shall not make haste."*

On the other hand, the man, calm and composed, who, desirous of making the same port, weighs and examines every thing before he receives it, and even then, perhaps, receives it doubtingly, should be careful not to stand on the borders of scepticism, but praying fervently for a right faith, pursue diligently those truths in which he firmly believes, that by walking forward in the little light, more may be granted, and his path may shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. He will then find zeal to increase with his faith; and though he will press forward more calmly, it will be with more safety and certainty, than the opposite character; and if his progress be slow, he will be in no dan-

* Isaiah, xxviii. 16.

ger of making shipwreck, but arrive safe, at last, at the desired haven of rest.

I am thankful that I can still rejoice in lowness, and find a little strength afforded to enable me to put up a secret prayer for support in the day of conflict; and without desiring to shrink from discipline, patiently endure whatever may be allotted me.

O Lord God, enable me to look towards thy holy habitation with unshaken faith, and steadily fix my eye on those durable riches which are independant on the breath of man. Then, every thing we meet with here, will be easily submitted to, and we shall travel forward as pilgrims, who are only solicitous to arrive safe at their journey's end.

1781.

[*Birth of a son.*] 18*th*, 1*st M°*.—It is some mortification to reflect on the necessity there seems for us to be taught our own weakness, by the experience of suffering. We fancy we can support many things, which, upon trial, we find ourselves inadequate to; this should lead us to distrust ourselves on all occasions, and likewise to sympathise with, and pity others, rather than with harsh se-

verity judge their failings. Our own powers can do but little for us; and in the hours of distress, of either body or mind, we cry out for the merciful hand of Heaven to support us. Without this superior assistance we should sink under many trials; but He whose providential care is over all his works, fails not to attend to the supplication of those who apply to him through faith, and will either relieve our sufferings, or enable us to bear them.

I may thankfully acknowledge, that in all conflicts, either of body or mind, I have not been deserted by the supporting arm of a heavenly Father; and under a full sense of the benefit I have received by discipline, I would endeavour to consider "the rod, and who hath appointed it."*

27th.—To be oppressed with lowness is painful; but there is a kind of calm lowness, which sometimes overspreads the mind, both pleasing and profitable. In this state, meekness and love seem particularly prevalent; and though we sensibly feel the many tender ties to earth, yet this feeling is mixed with such a resignation of will to the wise Disposer of all events, that we find our minds

* Micah, vi. 9.

covered with tranquillity, and we indeed, possess our souls in peace.

Here we seem built, as it were, on the sure foundation; we stand with fortitude against the floods, the wind and the rain, and for a while remain unshaken. But the weakness of human nature again prevails, temptations grow powerful, and we are overcome. Let us then, fervently pray for the assistance of that Power, who can alone enable us to stand secure amidst surrounding difficulties. I believe he sometimes permits us to fall even very low, that all human pride may be laid in the dust, and that learning to distrust ourselves, we may depend solely on him.

27th, 3d M°.—In my own experience, I can often trace judgment to a previous failure of duty in some respect. This, I have sometimes found to be profitable, and to have occasioned good resolutions of doing better in future, through the assistance of Divine Grace. But at the same time that I find it beneficial for myself, I think it highly injurious to form an opinion of the conduct of others, from any evil that may befal them. The sun shineth, and the rain descendeth on the evil and on the good. Prosperity and ad-

versity, with regard to this world, happen alike to both; and the latter, though it may sometimes appear as a judgment for past offences, and be designed to rouse people to a sense of duty, yet at others, it may only be intended to prune the fruit-bearing branches, that they may bring forth more fruit, and to refine us in the furnace till every particle of dross and tin be utterly consumed, that we may come out as pure gold.

It is only He who searcheth the heart, and can penetrate into every secret motive of action, who can form a just estimate of our conduct. Our knowledge is very superficial; and those who may appear to stand with the fairest characters, may have many sins and impurities known only to God; whilst others, in whom *we* can behold many more faults, but who are, from their situations, either outwardly or inwardly, subjected to more temptations, or have fewer helps, are less culpable in the sight of God, and like the publican formerly, are justified rather than the other.

17*th*, 5*th M°*.—A review of some of my sentiments respecting education, has revived a remark that frequently occurs to my mind,

on the difference between theory and practice. We must become parents, before we can feel the difficulties attendant on that station. We can quietly look on, and judge this, or the other thing, to be very easy; but when it is our turn to be tried, we learn by experience, that the judgment we had formed was very superficial. The same inference may be drawn from observation on various other stations in life, many of which, our self-love may flatter us that we should fill with more propriety than those who already occupy them. But let our experience in one particular, teach us so much wisdom as may prevent a wrong estimation of ourselves in others; and having been once deceived in forming an opinion of the ease of acting in a station which we have never tried, let us be warned to avoid future judgments of the kind, and rather compassionate the failings of others who may have more temptations to encounter than we are aware of, than censure them with harsh severity.

6th, 8th M°.—A FEW censorious remarks, the other evening, led me to consider how apt we are to get into the seat of judgment upon others, and censure every one that de-

viates from our own line of conduct. But we can have no surer sign of being in a wrong spirit ourselves, than when we feel that such a disposition prevails; for true virtue not only leads to charity, humility and distrust of ourselves, but likewise diffuses itself in love to all, in a concern for their welfare, and wishes for their perfection. There are seasons when we feel ourselves so far raised above every thing earthly, as to be free from envy or jealousy, and united in love to all mankind. And can we say that any seasons are equal to these? or so strongly unite us to the Deity, who is the fountain of love? Let us then rather endeavour to cultivate this overflowing love, than censure or condemn where there is no prospect of benefit by it. The mind that feels itself averse to the strait and narrow way, is sometimes pleased with the opportunity of seeing those stumble and fall who are endeavouring to pursue it. And some others, who see the necessity of striving to walk therein, feel so many difficulties attending it, that they are ready to think their own lot hard. Both these states may be disposed to censure others, not having yet attained to that sweetness, which can testify that all the

ways of God are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace.

1782.

22d, 2d M°.—THERE is a strange propensity in some minds to be continually building upon happiness here; and if they are disappointed in one situation, to look forward to another. But this is not the way to profit by the corrections we meet with. We should rather endeavour after a state of greater purity and abstraction from the world, that we may be fitted for more durable happiness. But some of us may acknowledge that it occasions many a hard struggle to get above the world, particularly to those who are too desirous of the praise and approbation of men. If they attain any degree of excellence, they will most likely meet with many obstacles, and many falls, before they learn to dwell in the valley of humility. The tall cedars of Lebanon, and the lofty oaks of Bashan, must all be bowed down. Every human excellence and perfection must become of no account in comparison of winning Christ, who, through meekness and suffering, will lead us to glory. It is in vain to endeavour to mix

the pride of man with Christian perfection. They are opposite in their nature, and must be so in their end. An eager pursuit after the applause of men may spur people on to some things laudable in themselves; but at the same time, it leads to such self-complacency, and high opinions of ourselves, as can but ill brook the mortifications we may meet with, and much less submit to that cross of Christ, which appears foolishness in the eyes of the world. Oh how gladly would we escape a suffering, mortified state! The terms seem so hard, that we are almost ready to turn away sorrowful. But let us think on the peace and tranquillity accompanying the patient, suffering soul, which is wholly dependant on God, and whose chief solicitude is to please him. Freed from all the turbulent passions of fallen man, it can pursue its path with sweet serenity of mind; it can look at every abasement and mortification it may meet with, as the kind chastisements of a heavenly Father, to draw to still greater purity and assimilation with himself: and thus supported with holy hope and faith in God, it can press forward from state to state, till, having filled up the measure of its existence in time, it can forget all its sorrows in a boundless futurity. Oh glorious, happy

state! May my mind be disposed to drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism so essentially necessary to salvation.

23d, 4th M°.—If ever I undertook any thing in the fear of the Lord, I think I may say I have this day had my four children inoculated in that most holy fear. Yet it has been accompanied with trembling and ardent breathings of soul to the Most High, for their preservation. Though it has been done with a firm persuasion of its propriety, I feel deeply anxious for the event, beyond what I think I should feel from the apprehension of any ill in which I could have no hand.

15th, 5th M°.—Yesterday we left our lodgings in London, and returned with much satisfaction to our own habitation. I may truly say I desire to have my mind covered with thankfulness for this last, as well as numberless other unmerited favours, which it has pleased the Supreme Being, in the course of his Providence, to bestow. What shall I render unto thee for all thy mercies, is sometimes the language of my soul. And knowing, that when we do our best, we can be but unprofitable servants, I have been

solicitous to be kept in that meek and humble state, which is acceptable in the sight of the Most High, and to feel my heart entirely devoted to his service.

12*th*, 9*th M°*.—When we meet with opposition to our own opinions, it is sometimes difficult to prevent being too tenacious in the support of them. But at the same time that we are advocates for what we are fully persuaded is right, we should consider that others have the same privilege of judging, and endeavour to prevent opposition of sentiment from breaking in upon true harmony. Men ever have differed, and most likely ever will (while the present constitution of the world remains) differ in their opinions on various subjects. If they are not productive of evil or inconvenience, it seems needless to controvert them; and if they are, the most effectual way of opposing them, is by carefully guarding against too much warmth or zeal in our opposition.

15*th*, 9*th M°*.—An exertion of much discipline seems very little adapted for females. There is certainly too much truth in the observation, that they love power, and often make an improper use of it. Perhaps, if we

say that the human mind is prone to seek its own exaltation, and sometimes judges itself pursuing the glory of God, and the good of the Church, while the spark that actuates it is its own importance, we may include men as well as women; both are too apt to swerve from the path of meekness and humility, and estimate their own virtues by the crimes of others. In the present depraved state of human nature, a degree of discipline seems indispensably necessary to preserve order and harmony in any society. The less it is extended beyond the laws of morality, (in general) I should think the better. And seeing how difficult it is to sit in condemnation on others, without being lifted up with an idea of our own superior righteousness; we should rather derive satisfaction from the consideration that nature has, in some measure, excused us from the exercise of these duties, than covet to be employed in them. Let us exhort one another with all sisterly love, endeavouring to strengthen and edify the Church, but leave to those, deemed the stronger vessels, the office of chastising, or cutting off its members; never wishing to lend a helping hand in such business, unless present particular duty point the way.

1*st*, 11*th M°*.—Of all the temptations to which human nature, in this frail state of existence, is liable, there is none we are more apt to fall in with, than an opinion of our own perfections. We see many thus ensnared, who have been preserved from the follies and vanities of the world; and the more knowledge and experience we gain, the more we see it necessary to stand upon our guard. "Stand off, I am holier than thou," is, I doubt, the language of some, who are less justified than the poor publican; and the misfortune is, that we do not see this to be our language, but are probably, indulging ourselves with the idea that we are in the meek and humble state which is to inherit the kingdom. Whenever we feel great zeal against contrary opinions in others, or set up our own consciences, or rule of life, for them, we may always rest assured that we are in great danger of indulging spiritual pride. From an extensive knowledge and study of mankind, we must learn that in all nations and times, there has been a variety of sentiments, both with regard to faith and practice, entertained by those, who, with sincere hearts, endeavoured to perform their duty. That the same differences should still subsist, therefore, ceases to be a wonder.

For what end they are permitted by Infinite Wisdom, is not for us to determine.

Every thing around us, every observation we can make, may tend to confirm the knowledge that we are poor, ignorant, fallible beings. Our reliance is on the goodness of God, who we trust, will make us finally happy. And if we are endowed with clearer conceptions of the Deity, or more natural knowledge, it is no cause of boasting; seeing that all we are possessed of is his gift, and that we are but as clay in his hands. If we think that we can point out to our brethren, a more certain road to happiness than that which they are pursuing, let us do it in the meekness of wisdom; remembering, that our opinions, as well as our practices, are liable to error, and must remain so, as long as we can see but as "through a glass darkly." These considerations would check that confidence in self, which is so apt to prevail, and help us to walk forward in humility and fear, the only safe state for such a poor dependant creature as man. On our first setting out in a religious life, we meet with many trials and crosses. We find we must give up many of the pleasures and gratifications which are craved by our sensual appetites, and in the performance of these duties,

are apt to take merit to ourselves; thus making an entrance for self-complacency and spiritual pride. We are then much inclined to make a false estimate of things, and judge ourselves better for the many crosses we bear; instead of which, we should look upon their *being* crosses, as signs of our great imperfection, and of a want of that union of will with the Supreme Power, which constitutes both our perfection and happiness. We do well, to take up the cross to our natural inclinations, and resign the flesh-pots of Egypt at the command of our heavenly Father; but we shall certainly arrive at a better state, when our inclinations become conformable to our duty.

17*th*, 11*th M°*.—Oh, the miseries of life! This is the language of sensibility, when struck with the various scenes of wretchedness which sometimes present themselves to our view. When we consider the hard lot of many, who can scarcely earn, with unremitted labour, daily sustenance for themselves and their families; of others, who are just ready to sink under the weight of painful diseases, and of some, who are doubly oppressed, both with poverty and sickness; we can hardly forbear being touched with

sympathy for their distress, and putting up a secret prayer, that our portion may be less bitter than theirs. Nor are these all the miseries of life; its evils are too many to be enumerated. The loss of every near connexion that can make life desirable; various other sources of anguish that must embitter every enjoyment; and, above all evils, the being deprived of reason; these are scenes, which, when we reflect on them, make us almost ready to tremble, for fear of what our future lives may produce. They likewise afford a strong presumption that a better life awaits us, in which we shall no longer regret the day that we were born, nor mourn that we were brought into existence. But we have been taking a view of life in its most gloomy recesses. It bears a very different aspect to a great part of mankind, some of whom, forgetting how soon their mirth may be turned into heaviness, and their joy into mourning, remain unhurt by the calamities of others, and are pursuing a round of pleasure. There are many whose situations are more moderate; enough raised above calamity, to be thankful for the enjoyment of many temporal blessings, yet sufficiently checquered with anxiety and pain, to make them desirous of more substantial happiness.

In this review of life, we have taken things very much in their natural state, without considering the influence of religion on our minds. When we call in its aid to support us, and the hope of a glorious immortality; when we consider that these short afflictions, which endure but for a moment, will, by our making a proper use of them, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; we then learn to rejoice in tribulation; and abounding in that which alone is truly estimable, feel our minds renewedly filled with consolation and peace. Faith in God is the only sure anchor to support the soul under its various conflicts. When we say faith in him, it implies faith in his wisdom, power and goodness, and in his providential care over the workmanship of his hands. A view of the miseries of life, should not depress our spirits, or lessen our faith. We cannot sufficiently trace either their cause or their effect, to form any certain judgment for what end they were designed; therefore, leaving conjectures, and vain inquiries concerning them, let us confide in the mercy and goodness of God; trusting, that in due time, we shall see through this veil that at present surrounds us. The many temporal evils to which we are exposed, the

errors which we are continually liable to fall into, (not to say the great wickedness which we lament in others, and from which we cannot say that we ourselves are safe,) are all lessons that should teach us great humility, and make us serve the Lord with fear and trembling, daily praying for his assistance and preservation. Perhaps, notwithstanding all the real and imaginary evils we have to encounter, many of us remain too strongly attached to this present life, to look upon it as we ought, a passage only to a better. If we considered ourselves but as travellers, we should be better disposed to put up with the inconveniences we met with, and think nothing essential that affected not our everlasting home.

12*th*, 12*th M°*.—I have sometimes felt my mind so overspread with a sense of human misery, that I have been ready to comfort myself that so large a portion of my own existence was already past, and likewise have felt a degree of regret that I have brought others into being, whose path for any thing I know, may be strewed only with briars and thorns. The present enjoyment of them does not always immediately banish these gloomy thoughts, and I look forward with anxiety and fear.

When I contemplate all the various species of creation, it seems as if one race of beings were designed to be the sport and prey of another. Man too, falls in with the general propensity. Perhaps, superior beings look down upon us with as little concern as we behold a commonwealth of bees or emmets. Our pursuits are not always dictated by more apparent sagacity; and though we exclaim at the evils of life, instead of endeavouring to lessen them, we take a pleasure in tormenting each other, and add to the bitterness of that cup which we are ready to say is scarcely supportable, but that we know not how to avoid it. These are melancholy reflections; but are they not just, and adapted to the state of man, who, though he may sometimes consider himself but as a speck in the wide circle of creation, and as almost unworthy of notice, yet is in general too much centered in the idea of his own importance, and that every thing visible is designed for his pleasure or use? Every consideration seems profitable that may tend to keep us in humility, so long as it does not lead us to distrust. We cannot contemplate infinite Power, without being struck with wonder and amazement. Perhaps *we*, in our present state, join the spiritual world, as the vege-

tative joins the animal, so closely, that it may be difficult to pronounce to which rank we belong. We shall not be depressed with our present state, while we consider it only as preparative for our translation to a better; and though we may sometimes sink with the idea of our own nothingness, and say with the Psalmist, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him;"* yet, if we consider the Almighty as ever present with all his works, that he is on the right hand and on the left, though we cannot perceive him, and is intimately acquainted with the inmost recesses of our souls; does it not inspire us with a humble confidence that he will look with pleasure on those who reverence his name, and unite himself with those who thirst for the enjoyment of his presence. Comfort me, O Lord, with this reviving hope. Increase my faith and my love, and enable me, I humbly pray thee, to draw near to thee in spirit. Turn my mind from vain inquiries into those things which are too deep for me, and which lead not to truth. Condescend to assist me, O gracious God, in the performance of all practical duties, and cover my heart with universal benevolence and love. Thus, guided

* Psalm viii. 4.

by thy unerring wisdom, may I fill up the place which thou hast allotted me, and when the measure of my time is accomplished, be gathered into thy eternal rest. Permit me to offer up this ardent breathing of soul, for those who are near and dear to me, and for whose welfare I am anxiously solicitous. Gather us all to thyself, O Lord, and permit us to join that innumerable company of saints and angels who are already made perfect.

1783.

1*st*, 2*d* *M°*.—YESTERDAY, about noon, —— suddenly departed this life. In this removal it is our own loss we mourn, not hers; for the only important object in life is to be fit for death; and when that period arrives, we can reap no advantage to ourselves from a longer tarriance in a world beset with anxieties and cares, even in its most happy state. This idea is a never-failing source of consolation respecting the deceased. And though we feel that the ties of nature and friendship cannot be broken without a severe shock, yet I believe the pangs of grief will be moderated, rather than augmented, by the consideration of that harmony and

love, which we felt in full force with our dear relation, who is the object of our present sorrow. A fond mother, a most affectionate and condescending wife,—and whose sweetness of disposition must ever remain as a pleasant memorial, in the hearts of all those who were connected with her.

7th, 2d M°.—Yesterday morning, attended my sister's funeral. She was buried at Winchmore-hill, after a satisfactory meeting, in which the words of consolation and advice were both administered.

"How many go as sudden, not as safe,"

is a sentiment of Young's which has often occurred to my mind since the late affecting event. We have frequent admonitions and warnings, that it is a solemn thing to live, and an awful thing to die. Oh that my mind may be deeply impressed with a sense thereof: and, considering that there may possibly be but a step between me and death, may I walk with that care and circumspection, which will make me ready, whenever the awful messenger shall arrive. This day begins my 36th year. When I review the preceding years, I cannot but lament the many failings I have been guilty of, and the little progress I have made in true purity of heart. Yet I feel a reviving hope, that *that*

supporting arm, which has in some measure preserved me, is still near to help, and that by a more firm dependance on all its leadings, I shall press forward in a progressive state.

Great indeed are the advantages of true living faith. I often feel my heart deeply engaged in the desire to acknowledge, with proper thankfulness, the goodness of God, having had frequent cause to adore it in his various dispensations, whether of mercy or of judgment; and an ardent breathing of soul often accompanies my mind for an increase of this precious faith, which can indeed still all the boisterous waves, and conduct us through the ocean of life to an inheritance amongst those that are sanctified.

12*th*, 3*d* *M°*.—Some sentiments dropped in conversation the other evening, seemed to imply an idea that pride might sometimes operate in our religious disownments. I was led to many serious reflections on the subject, and on the great difficulty of acting right in the exercise of discipline.

I think I feel a warm attachment to the Society, and sincere wishes for its welfare. I see many led astray into various deviations

from our professed principles, and from the truth itself: but I would not have these so blended together, as always to put the one for the other, lest, by too zealously attempting to support the former, the latter should sink to the ground.

That truth remains unchangeable, the same for ever, we cannot doubt: but perhaps its modifications may be different, and there may still be room to put the query, "What is truth?" Moral rectitude and obedience to God's commands, have gained his favour in all ages of the world. But very different things have been prescribed as tests of obedience, and different laws been enacted at different periods. A prohibition to taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge was all the restraint we read of, as being laid upon our first parents. After their fall, as man increased, a variety of other laws became necessary; and when the Jews were selected for a peculiar people, it was by the observance of a multiplicity of laws, that they were to gain divine favour. These seem to have been designed but as the shadows of a more perfect dispensation yet to be revealed; under favour of which we now rejoice in the hope of immortality. Moral rectitude, and obedience

to the inward manifestations of light, as now revealed, remain essentially necessary duties, and what we may, with safety, press home upon all mankind. But much greater care is necessary in endeavouring to enforce upon others the opinions and doctrines of men, even though we may have the strongest evidence to believe that they were guided by divine counsel.

It does not appear to me, that even the reputation of our Society is likely to be increased, by a rigorous exertion of discipline. Many may be cast out, who are, as it were, halting between two opinions, and who, in time, might be turned into a safer path. Others might quit us with anger, though, probably, without reluctance; and some, under an hypocritical garb, would, by the obvious improprieties of their conduct, bring more dishonour upon the Society, than all the outgoings of others.

17*th*, 3*d* M°.—I often love to take a review of my life, and traverse over its various scenes, from an early period to the present time. The more I contemplate it, the more forcibly I see the necessity of humility, and of guarding against all self-righteousness or exaltation.

There is nothing I more fervently pray for, than to be kept in an humble dependance on the Supreme Being; earnestly desiring to feel my mind covered with that charity, which sincerely wishes the welfare of all mankind, and that they may be gathered under the wing of Divine love. I think there is no part of my life to which I can look back, wherein I may not acknowledge that my mind was under religious impressions; yet, at some times they have been more powerful than at others; and, perhaps, at none stronger, than when I was led into the path of great self-denial, and a more perfect acquiescence in our professed religious opinions.

The judgment we can form of others, is often superficial. Their inward purification may be going forward, whilst a concurrence of outward circumstances may rather lead us to an apprehension that they are losing that ground, which they had once conquered. Many deep probations are necessary for some minds, before they acquire a right view of things, and learn to estimate themselves as they really are: whatever tends to promote humility, and an entire resignation and submission of will to the Divine Being, is evidently for our benefit.

25th, 3d M°.—I believe many people are hardly aware how much they are indebted, for what may be esteemed their virtue and prudence, to being placed in some degree out of temptation. Self-applause seems so natural to the human mind, that we can hardly be too careful in our endeavours to watch against it. If we consider that we only *know* how we should act in those stations in which we have been tried, and that respecting all others we can only form conjectures; at the same time remarking the many deficiencies in our own conduct, which, with all our *self-flattery*, must appear conspicuous; it will certainly lead us to greater charity and humility, and less severity in censuring the failings of others, who may have many allurements to vice or improprieties, with which we have been happily unacquainted. Indeed, with regard to ourselves, we dare not look forward to the future, and say that we shall act with as much propriety as even we have hitherto acted. The only ground of hope is not by a dependance on our own strength and abilities; but by humbly seeking that divine Power which alone can enable us to walk forward with safety. I think, I may say, the more I increase in years, the more ardently I pray to be kept in a meek and humble frame of

mind. It preserves us from many dangers, and is, indeed, the foundation for the greatest happiness we can attain, respecting this present life. For whoever has experienced the conflict of passions, of envy, emulation, ambition and a thirst of praise, though they may have been in part gratified, yet will readily acknowledge that they have made a happy exchange, if ever they come to experience the tranquillity arising from a meek and humble spirit.

I believe it rarely happens that those who are least serious, form an idea of enjoying the happiness of heaven with all those passions within them. They rather look forward to it, as a state of purity and holiness, wherein they shall be freed from all those restless pursuits and anxieties that now attend them. Could they but be persuaded that the nearer they draw toward that heavenly state, the nearer they draw to real and substantial happiness, they would surely be prevailed upon to begin their progress towards it. But temptations on the one hand or the other too often shut out this faith, and they indulge the hope of as sudden a transition in all the affections of the soul, as there appears to be from life to death, in the state of the body. Yet every thing we can observe will, I think, lead to the conviction that our

minds are in a progressive state, and that we advance but by slow degrees in the road to perfection. Whether we can ever arrive at it in this life, in the full acceptation of the word, seems but a vain inquiry, since, if ever we fancied we had got there, we must be in an exceedingly dangerous situation. But it is our interest, as well as our duty, to press after it as fast as we can, knowing that our continuance here is very uncertain, and that we cannot be partakers of a state of unmixed felicity without purity of heart. Moral laws, and moral righteousness, are acceptable in the sight of God, and highly beneficial to mankind. But it is the soul refined, freed from all earthly pollutions, devoted to the will of God, and thirsting for the enjoyment of his presence, that prepares us for the full fruition of that heavenly happiness which must consist in our union with God: and wherein, as we advance nearer and nearer to perfection, we may probably experience a change from glory to glory, till we arrive at the most consummate happiness that can be enjoyed by created beings.

12*th*, 7*th* M°.—Jealousy is a very tormenting passion of the human mind; and if indulged, must inevitably destroy domestic hap-

piness. That jealousy which is felt by a husband or wife, from an apprehension of their partner's affections being engaged with some other object, is not what comes under my present idea; but rather those more trifling circumstances which frequently extend to family and friends, and occasion the heartburnings and want of harmony, which we often see cause to lament. Persons who entertain notions that they are not treated with proper respect or proper confidence, are continually seeking out to themselves sources of uneasiness: they catch at every shadow, and picture it into a reality; and though their friends, who love and respect them, may wish to guard against giving them offence, yet it requires so much vigilance and attention, and after all their care, sometimes so undesignedly happens, that the generality are much more likely to give it up entirely. If we would consult our own happiness and peace of mind, we must endeavour to get the better of these irritable feelings, which, if we search into their true source, I believe we shall be obliged to acknowledge spring from pride. If, by a proper line of conduct, we know ourselves deserving of friendship and respect, why should we be haunted with the idea that we do not receive it, when

general observation will lead us to conclude, that it is most commonly bestowed where due. And it may not be unprofitable to consider, that a jealousy of want of confidence in those we are connected with, is very unlikely to increase it: since the real confidence of the heart, and the continual fear of offending, are incompatible with each other.

1784.

[*Extract from a letter.*]—11*th*, 7*th* M^o.—I believe happiness is much more equally distributed amongst mankind, in their various ranks, than at the first glance we might be able to perceive. The trials of some are so obvious, that we cannot help commiserating their condition. We think of their state, and derive comfort for ourselves, from the consciousness of being possessed of more temporal blessings. Yet could we look into the hearts of those whom we sometimes are almost ready to envy, we should probably find them little correspondent with their outside appearance; and they would prove subjects for pity, equally with those whose condition we deplore. Some things, very painful and disagreeable, seem to be annexed to the condition of human nature; and I believe we

shall, in general, find it easier to bring our minds to contentment with outward things, than to bring those outward things to a conformity with our inclinations. The first lies in a great measure within our own power, the latter is dependant on others, and on a great many contingent and unforeseen events.

I have heard it remarked, that the mistress of a family should resemble the principal wheel in a watch; which puts all the rest in motion, while it seems scarcely to move itself. I have generally observed that much bustle only creates confusion. A great deal may be done by regularity and method, while those who want it scarcely know how to get through with only a small portion of business.

1786.

17th, 4th M°.—"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* Whether this prediction was designed chiefly for the immediate followers of our Saviour, or to be taken more comprehensively, as for the generality of those who were to enter into a state of blessedness; yet, observation will lead us to conclude, that many have so run their race, as to obtain an immortal

* Acts, xiv. 22.

crown, without experiencing any uncommon portion of suffering, which the text, taken literally, in an extensive sense, seems to imply. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."* The most prosperous situation is surrounded with trials of various kinds: but if good and evil happen alike to all, and if the sun shines, and the rain descends on the just as well as the unjust, there seems no inference to be drawn that the righteous are particularly tribulated respecting the outward, (excepting in some particular states of persecution, where the above text appears to me most applicable;) and with regard to the inward, we are certainly taught to believe, that though they may have many trials of faith and patience, yet they at times feel that consolation which is an unfailing support, and can make them rejoice even in tribulation. The disposition to magnify our sufferings, I have often thought increased by the prediction, that "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom." Some perhaps, may fear that it is not sufficiently fulfilled in their own case, and therefore, instead of submitting with cheerfulness and resignation to the evils which fall to their lot, they are disposed to

* Job, v. 7.

think more of them than they deserve, lest they should be in danger of receiving the sentence, thou hadst "thy good things" in this life. Others may perhaps be inclined to believe, that the greater the suffering, the greater the reward. Both are certainly in an error, though it may proceed from a religious motive: for it is not voluntary suffering or humiliation that will gain us any reward, but that cheerful acquiescence with the Divine will, and patient resignation to whatever he may allot us in our various stations, that will render us acceptable in his sight.

14*th*, 10*th M°*.—Those whose minds are thoroughly purified, will look only with a compassionate eye on the failings of others, desirous of doing them good from the prevalence of universal love; and in that disposition, pointing out the path that may lead them to eternal peace. But how hard is it to arrive at that state, in which we feel a cheerful acquiescence with all the orderings and dispensations of Providence towards us; and, when we think hard things are required of us, how necessary is it to keep a strict watch over ourselves, lest any jealousy should arise at the liberty of others. For in this

mortified state, there is some danger of seeking consolation in the idea that we are better than they.

Here too, we may be led to attempt dictating to others, instead of waiting for the openings of that pure spirit of light and love, which seeks to save and restore that which is lost, rather than cast out and destroy. Many are the dangers and temptations which we are liable to fall into, in our progress towards a spiritual life: this makes it necessary for us to keep a diligent watch over ourselves, strictly examining the motives that influence our actions, and desirous that all our ways may be ordered of the Lord. The more we become redeemed from the love of the world, and the various inordinate lusts thereof, the more we shall feel true peace and tranquillity of mind; and the love of God increasing according to our progress heavenward, temporal things will proportionably sink in our estimation; we shall experience that hard things are indeed become easy, and that our delight is to walk in his commandments. Instead of longing for the Babylonish garment, or the wedge of gold, we shall rather comfort ourselves that we have been drawn from such things; and though the giving them up might be a great cross to our

natural inclinations, yet, feeling the superior happiness of a religious life to all the gratifications that this world can bestow, we shall be induced ardently to wish that every obstruction may be removed that tends to separate "between us and our God;" and that through the future course of our lives, we may be enabled to walk in all the law of the Lord blameless.

1787.

11*th*, 3*d M°*.—"LEAD us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil."* This petition will be likely to occur to a mind awfully impressed with a sense of its own weakness, and under some of those painful conflicts which fall to the lot of most thinking persons in their passage through life. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness."† Many trials may assault us, unseen and unknown to our companions, or even to our most intimate friends; and though, when under the sweet influences of divine love, we may be led to acknowledge, that the ways of virtue are pleasant, and that all her paths are peace, yet there are other times, when our faith and our hope seem almost ready to for-

* Matt. vi. 13. Luke, xi. 4. † Prov. xiv. 10.

sake us, and we have to traverse the barren wilderness, and the land of doubt and uncertainty, assaulted by various foes that war against our peace, tempting us to fresh hankerings after those worldly indulgences which we have seen it right to forsake, and afresh perplexing our minds with queries, whether the Lord hath indeed, said so and so?

When we have passed through some severe conflicts, and feel the reward of heartfelt peace, we too often conclude the day of trial over; but we may stand in need of many further conflicts for the purification of our minds; many trials of our faith and obedience may be yet to come, and many dippings in Jordan may be required, before we shall come out thoroughly cleansed and healed of all our leprosy. Oh that in these proving seasons, our faith may not fail! Let us put our trust in God, and pray for a renewal of strength, that through the influence of his power, we may hold out to the end. Our temptations are often very different, from the difference of our situations in life. Those cups are at one time very bitter, which at another we swallow without much difficulty. This should lead us to great charity and caution respecting the judgment we form of

others; not to expect too much from them, but consider that their temptations may be very different from ours; and that so far from daring to say, that in this, or the other case, we ourselves should stand, we should rather, from a feeling of our own weakness and insufficiency, be led humbly and fervently to pray, "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

5th, 6th M°.—Oh, saith my soul, that we may more and more watch over our own spirits, and keep them in subjection. Words are of little avail; we may say we prefer others before ourselves, and look upon ourselves as the least of the flock; but if we are truly humble, we shall be content that others should think so too, and not wish to receive honour from men: praying that he who sees the inmost recesses of the heart, would preserve us from spiritual, as well as all other pride; and that, even when we can look back with a self-approving consciousness that we have performed our duty both to God and man, by pursuing those things which we have believed acceptable in the sight of our great Creator, we may not be lifted up in our minds, nor think more highly

of ourselves than we ought to think; remembering that what we are, we are by the grace of God.

1788.

24th, 1st M°.—It has often been the earnest, fervent prayer of my mind, that patience might have its perfect work, that I might not flinch in the day of discipline, but submit to that fire which would thoroughly purify, and make me perfect and entire, wanting nothing. I often feel my mind impressed with a fear, that though I may have made some progress towards the spiritual Canaan, there should yet remain so much of the old leaven, as might occasion me to fall short of the promised land. Oh, that I may not perish in the wilderness, or in the day of battle; but feel a renewal of that faith which will enable me to follow the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, and in due time overcome every opposition!

10th, 4th M°.—Good humour is, I think, that habit of mind, which is disposed to please, and to be pleased with the surrounding objects; perhaps, not so essentially necessary as a good temper, its influence being

chiefly in the trivial concerns of life; but the want of it will embitter the most pleasing scenes, cause fear to be substituted in the room of freedom and confidence, and throw a gloom over every enjoyment. It is a quality as beneficial to the possessor as to the rest of mankind; we should, therefore, endeavour to cultivate it, for the sake of our own happiness, as well as that of others; and I am firmly of the opinion that much depends upon ourselves, though we may be sometimes disposed to conclude that it is chiefly influenced by things foreign.

From the little regard for each other's happiness expressed by the general conduct of mankind, one would be almost ready to query, whether they thought it a spontaneous production, natural to the soil of humanity, and flourishing on every branch. But if we hear them speak, it will be in very different language; vexation and disappointment, they will say, is the lot of mortals, and each individual will be apt to forget how many unnecessary grains he adds to the weight of human misery. That benevolence and goodness of heart which delights in making others happy, will return, fraught with additional happiness to the breast of the possessor; and if we consider good humour

as a fruit almost necessarily produced by good dispositions, we shall endeavour to cultivate it as much as we can, and see the propriety of guarding against that sourness or pettishness, which would inevitably counteract the most serious purposes and best wishes of our souls.

17*th*, 5*th M°*.—Sentiments expressive of a lively zeal for the benefit and welfare of the Church have often afforded me subject for meditation.

How far individuals ought to go, in the giving up their own private duties to fulfil those of a public nature, I would wish to leave each one to determine for himself. But it has often occurred to me, that as the whole body is made up of individuals, or distinct members, if each of those members performed its proper functions, and kept in a sound, healthy state, there would be very little for the Church, as a body, to regulate. And though the love of God, diffusing itself over the soul, naturally begets a zeal for his service, and for the welfare of others, yet I have ever had the idea, that it must begin with ourselves, and spread gradually; and I have sometimes thought, that the expressing too strongly an approbation of those

who devote themselves to what is termed church service, may stimulate others of whom it is not required to follow their example, by which they may be led to neglect those duties which were more properly within their sphere, and thus make work for their brethren, whom they intended to help.

6th, 7th M°.—Yesterday afternoon, we walked from home to my mother Woods' at Winchmore-hill, to spend a little time with her. This morning, R. Jones and C. Hustler visited the meeting here, and we were called to the awful consideration that we are but dust; to the necessity of being humble under the power of God; and of seeking a safe place of refuge when all temporal things must come to an end. Under that solemn covering of spirit which we sometimes feel to animate our minds, we are not unfrequently led to renew our covenant with the Father of spirits, to pray for an increase of faith, and for his preserving power. Under this sacred influence, we are ready to conclude that we can do all things; and feeling our minds comfortably affected, acknowledge his favour to be the one thing needful; that pearl of value which it is worth while to give up all to attain. But temptations again

assail us, doubts and reasonings take place in our minds, and we too frequently neglect walking steadily in that holy fear which would preserve us from evil, and is the appointed means to lead us to true wisdom.

O merciful Father, thou who seest our weakness, and rememberest that we are but dust, assist, we beseech thee, our feeble efforts and secret breathings of soul to become acceptable in thy sight. We feel that the spirit is ready, though the flesh is weak, and under a sense of the influence of thy power, are sometimes animated to pray for an increase of faith, and that we may witness thee to be our preserver in the hour of temptation. We may thankfully acknowledge that we have found thee, our never-failing refuge in the hour of distress, and that our afflictions have been sanctified to our benefit; and under a grateful sense of thy favours, are desirous that our love may increase, and that neither heights nor depths, principalities nor powers, things present nor to come, may ever be able to separate us from the love of thee in Christ Jesus our Lord.

31*st*, 8*th* *M°*.—"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."* This

* Luke, xxiii. 42.

prayer to be remembered in future by Him who alone can make us happy, must at times take place in every serious mind that looks forward with hope, that when all the transitory scenes of this life are past, it may meet with permanent felicity in that which is to come. And to be remembered here, as well as hereafter, will be the frequent petition of those who are solicitous to obtain the approbation of their heavenly Father; for we have much need of faith and patience to conduct us through all the various scenes of life, and sometimes feel our minds so clouded by doubts and perplexities, that we scarcely know which way to turn ourselves, without the kind remembrance of the Father of mercies, who, at some seasons, is graciously pleased to illuminate our minds, and renew our faith, so that through the uniting influence of his love, we feel him indeed to be our riches in poverty, our health in sickness, and a present helper in the needful time. Though a woe was denounced against the rich, as having received their consolation, though they may seem to be placed in the midst of prosperity, and live as on the fat of the land; yet a near view of them will convince us that they are often troubled as other men; that they eat the bread of adversity,

and drink the waters of affliction; and that instead of taking consolation in their outward substance, they stand in need of the prayer of faith, to support them under their various probations, and sometimes through those peculiar trials which arise from their elevation. In all stations of life it is necessary to guard against centering our minds in the enjoyment of this world's happiness. The southern lands will be but of little value without the springs of water. And though we may be thankful for the good things which we enjoy, yet we should consider them as not essential; and that if not properly used, they may prove a curse instead of a blessing. We had need to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation, and whether in prosperity or adversity, should endeavour to keep in an humble frame of mind, earnestly desiring that in all our pursuits we may be guided by Divine counsel.

28th, 9th M°.—"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* This was the language of the persecuted apostles, who had given up every earthly satisfaction to follow Christ; and it is still sometimes the language of those who

* I Cor. xv. 19.

feel themselves depressed in spirit, and who are ready to look back and consider the many self-denials they have practised for the sake of Divine favour. Though we are often told of the happiness of virtue, and sensibly feel that it has its reward; yet the steady adherence to it in all points will not be unattended with conflicts, which we shall find the need of superior strength to enable us to pass through. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."* This could not have been a necessary exhortation of our Saviour, if he had seen that the path of rectitude he pointed to would be smooth and even, and unattended with difficulty: but He who knew the secrets of the heart, knew how prone it was to evil, and the necessity of constant watchfulness and self-denial, to subdue its various corrupt passions and inclinations, which were continually warring against the soul. It is therefore vain to expect an exemption from these trials; we should rather endeavour to support them with meekness and patience, and endeavour to bear with fortitude even reproach and persecution, if it should happen to be our lot. A consciousness of our own integrity is a sure source of consolation in

* Luke, ix. 23.

the severest trials; and if we can but appeal, as some did formerly, "Lord, we have left all and have followed thee,"* we shall likewise receive the consolatory promise of an abundant reward.

30th, 10th M°.—Liberality of sentiment is so often commended in conversation, that it has sometimes led me to the inquiry, what liberality is? Whether it has any settled definition, or is only arbitrary, according to the notion of the person who uses it? If we look for *liberality* in the dictionary, we shall find it, "Bounty, a generous disposition of mind, exerting itself in giving largely, synonymous with generosity, denoting freedom of spirit." Now, as our sentiments are various respecting bounty, generosity, &c., and as one man would be apt to call that stingy or mean, which another might style generous; so likewise are we various in the opinions we form respecting liberality of sentiment. And when we hear one man speak of another, as being a liberal man, we form our idea of the person spoken of, from what we know of the character of him who speaks.

A religious man, a merely moral man, or a profligate, would never be likely to agree in

* Mark, x. 28.

their notions of liberality. The last would call him illiberal who judged his profligacy. The man of common morality would call in question the liberality of him who thought the duties of religion essential; and the religious man would think him sufficiently liberal, who, endeavouring to fulfil the duties of his own station, entertained a charitable hope respecting others, who differed from him in opinion. There are some who pride themselves on their liberality, who seem to forget, that if it be a real generosity of mind or charitable spirit, it must operate equally with respect to the bigot and the infidel; and that in all the intermediate stages towards bigotry and infidelity, the former has the same claim to their charity as the latter. But almost every man, in the judgment he forms of others, is disposed to bring them to the standard of his own ideas, and as they advance towards or recede from this standard, measures them accordingly, in the line of right or wrong. This is human nature, and to guard against its propensities to selfishness should be our constant endeavour. The more we feel virtue to be our happiness, get the better of this corrupt, fallen nature, and feel ourselves renewed into the spirit of real goodness, the more we shall experience the

extendings of love and charity towards all mankind. But, till this warfare is accomplished, we shall have many things to struggle with, and have need to pray that our faith fail not, and that we may be preserved in the hour of temptation.

7th, 12*th M°*.—When we look around the world with a philosophic eye, and consider the short duration of all its joys, or all its sorrows, we are ready to form an idea that they are too transient to be worthy of anxious solicitude with regard to the one or the other. But however these sentiments may do in theory, we have too often cause to lament that they have but little influence in practice. We feel ourselves extremely discontented at the prospect of losing only some of our little enjoyments, or the disappointment of our expectations; and if greater trials or vexations occur, we are too apt to forget all our philosophy, and give way to an unavailing regret. We can often reason well till our feelings become interested, and we then find the insufficiency of philosophy, and that we have need of something superior to enable us to stand firm in the day of trial. To see, and to feel, are two very different things. When we only see, we think that

this or the other trial should be supported with propriety; but when we feel, we too frequently flinch under the pressure of the evils which we had imagined we could have sustained. Surely, we have nothing of our own to boast of; we are made up of weakness and infirmity!

Preserve us, O Lord, in this state of nothingness and abasedness of spirit before thee, that feeling ourselves incapable of any good, we may be earnestly solicitous to be helped by thee, who art the only sure helper. And under a deep sense of the many failings we have been guilty of, enable us to pray that we may be forgiven, and preserved in a state of unfeigned repentance and true humility before thee.

A consciousness of being under the eye of the Supreme Being will support us when all earthly help fails; and if we can but feel that union of spirit which arises from witnessing the overshadowings of divine love upon the soul, it will enable us to cleave still faster to the Rock of ages, and to think no afflictions too great to be endured, if they are the means of obtaining the Divine favour, and purifying our souls, so that they may be acceptable in his sight.

11*th*, 12*th* M°.—"My son, give me thine heart."* The language of scripture is frequently expressive of the necessity of perfect obedience; a giving up the whole heart, will, and affections, and desiring to devote ourselves entirely to the will of the Supreme Being. If we consulted our own happiness, we should endeavour, as much as possible, to arrive at this state of resignation: neither wishing for, nor seeking after any thing, but to fulfil the will of Him who created us, and to walk with acceptance in his sight. We cause ourselves many needless struggles, by the endeavour to serve God and Mammon. We want to retain this or the other practice, this or the other indulgence, which our consciences testify against; thus keeping up a continual warfare in our minds, and excluding from ourselves that tranquillity of soul which can only be experienced by an entire acquiescence with the divine will. But self is very hard to be entirely subdued. If we have gained some conquests, we are too apt to sit down at ease, as if our work were accomplished; and when temptations are again presented, we are apt to murmur and repine, and say to Him who formed us, "Why hast thou made me thus?"† But this is a very un-

* Prov. xxiii. 26. † Rom. ix. 20.

profitable query; and while such a disposition prevails, it will prevent our partaking of those refreshing streams, which frequently comfort the weary traveller in his journey towards the promised land.

Oh that self may be entirely subdued, is the fervent prayer of my soul; that I may be supported through the hours of probation and conflict, and receiving every dispensation as from the hand of God, be finally accepted of him when my warfare is accomplished.

1790.

7th, 2d M°.—When we feel various passions warring in our souls, and struggling to gain dominion over us, we may well lament the depravity of our fallen nature, and may sometimes be ready to fear, that all our past labour to get the better of them has been in vain. But in this state of painful conflict, if our minds are engaged ardently to pray for help from Him who can alone bind the strong man armed, we shall find those passions, that may be compared to evil spirits, subdued, and the Prince of Peace will establish his reign within us. But we must sustain many combats in the course of our journey through

life. We have many evil propensities and dispositions to conquer, many trials and temptations to undergo, before we are in that subdued state which will preserve us in meekness and humility. When we take a review of all our past life, nothing occurs that brings so bitter a remembrance, as the many faults we have committed. We may, indeed, hope for mercy from Him who has promised pardon to all upon true repentance; but it is a humiliating lesson, to consider how apt we are to fall in the day of temptation, and that nothing but a state of prayer and watchfulness can preserve us from evil. We know that temptations and mortifications will again arise, and may well fear, lest we should again fall. Many things occur, which might teach us "not to think more highly" of ourselves than we ought to think; but we are too much disposed to find excuses for ourselves, without sufficiently submitting to that cleansing power, which through various modes of discipline, would root out all evil, and effectually subdue those passions that war against our peace. Have we not need to pray that our faith may be increased, and that we may be enabled to do all things through Him who strengthens

us, and will assist our weak endeavours, as we are engaged to rely upon Him, and trust in his supporting arm.

1792.

22d, 1st M°.—When the days of the feasting of Job's children were gone about, he sent and sanctified them, and offered burnt offerings for them, lest they should have sinned and cursed God in their hearts: the text adds, "Thus did Job continually."* This account seems very expressive of the religious care of Job for his children: and I believe the same care rests upon the minds of many parents in this day, who would gladly make offerings for their children lest they should have deviated from right, and who feel an anxious solicitude that they may be preserved in the hour of temptation, and enabled to walk forward in righteousness before the Lord. How to guide and instruct them in this path, how far to indulge and where to restrain, are subjects of frequent inquiry in the mind of an anxious parent. And may we not hope that parents will be so far enlightened, that they may be capaci-

* Job, i. 5.

tated to give right instructions, and that their endeavours properly to train their tender offspring, will be (in some measure at least) blessed with success. Under these impressions, I have sometimes felt a wish to address my children, and made some attempts towards it; but my ability has been hitherto so inadequate to my wishes, that I seem ready now to give it up, and only transcribe a few sentiments, which some time ago occurred to my mind.

My dear children, I often feel an anxious solicitude for your welfare, both in time and in eternity; and what I can do to promote it, is an inquiry that frequently accompanies my mind. Sensible of the uncertainty of time, and doubtful whether I may have the opportunity of giving much verbal instruction, I have sometimes felt drawings in my mind to leave a few sentences behind me, and, if possible, point out what may conduce to your lasting peace and satisfaction. The fear of making religion a burden has prevented me from much conversation on the subject: till we love religion, we have very little relish for such conversation, and unless the youthful mind feels some touches of divine love, and desires to do that which is right in the sight of God, I believe all that

we can do will avail but little. Yet I think I may say, that I have watched over you with desires, that I might not neglect any opportunities of impressing your tender minds with useful and important truths, dropping here a little, and there a little, whenever there appeared any opening.

Religion took hold of my mind at an early period, and has been my solace through life. I believe many are the objects of its impressions, but temptations are often too powerful for its restraints; and the youthful mind, delighting in liberty, is endeavouring to throw them off. But be assured, my dear children, that there is no real happiness without the approbation of our own consciences, and that approbation can only arise from the endeavour to pursue virtue in all our actions. If we practise little wilful deviations from the paths of rectitude, the temptations to greater will succeed, and we shall probably be led farther into the line of immorality than we at first intended. We should early endeavour to cherish every thing in ourselves that is good, and carefully abstain from all evil: never saying, even within ourselves, this, that, or the other little thing is of no consequence, if it in the least infringes on our apprehensions of duty; for it is step by step,

that many are led on into those paths of vice and folly, from which it is very difficult to return. Never be afraid of weighing your actions, and searching their motives to the bottom: if you are disposed to do right, there can be no bar to examination; and if we feel a wish to shun it, we may consider it as a certain proof that we are wrong.

Respecting recreations, it seems very difficult to draw any positive line. Every employment practised solely for amusement, (even a ride or a walk) may come under that denomination; and between the innocent and the vicious there are many gentle gradations. We may be always certain that we have gone too far, when our minds become so dissipated, that they are incapable of returning to any serious employment, or the practice of any private or social duty: or, if we cannot look back with a belief that we have been indulging ourselves in those things only, which are not disapproved by Him who sees the inmost recesses of the heart, as well as our more public actions. If we are afraid to examine our conduct, and wish to hide ourselves from ourselves, it is a certain proof that we mean to continue in the indulgence of such things as will not bear a strict scrutiny, and must be consequently in an unsafe state. Neither

shall we act prudently in going to the utmost verge of right. Walking at the edge of a precipice is always dangerous, and though we *may* get to the end unhurt, yet it would be wiser to keep at a distance more secure.

That there is no harm in this, that, or the other, is frequently pleaded by those who very little consider the nature of the things they plead for, or their dangerous tendencies. We are placed in the midst of temptations; and by giving way at first to those things which our consciences cannot approve, we fall by little and little, and at last arrive at that state, which, when our minds were clothed with more innocence, we should have beheld with abhorrence. By rejecting the impressions of conscience, they become less frequent and less forcible.

1793.

17*th*, 3*d* *M*°.—The state of the poor is a subject that often comes before the view of my mind, with those sympathetic feelings which excite the wish for their relief. We are sometimes told, that to give to the poor is an abuse of charity, and an encouragement in idleness. To encourage idleness is certainly not for the benefit of mankind. It is

ordained that man shall eat bread by the sweat of his brow; and this decree seems so fully verified, that those whose situation in life may apparently plead their exemption, are nevertheless obliged to labour in amusements of exercise, that they may taste the enjoyment of health. But though idleness should not be encouraged, there are proper bounds for labour, beyond which it becomes wearisome, and is of prejudice to the constitution.

If labour were more equally divided, I believe it would be a benefit to mankind in general; but while it is considered as a burden, every one is desirous of shaking it off from himself, though the consequence may often be that of imposing an unreasonable portion upon others.

If we did but look upon the poor as our brethren; equal, relating to every thing of importance, and beneath us only in those external circumstances which are continually shifting about in life, I think we should consider them as having some claim to the enjoyments of life, and an occasional remittance of persevering labour. Instead of this, we now see the industrious parents of a large family toiling all day, (and perhaps adding part of the night,) without being able, with

all their industry, to feed and clothe themselves and family comfortably. This seems a proof, that labour has not its adequate reward; and though many, like some of the present rich, might improperly use the benefit of greater temporal accommodations, we can scarcely consider that as a sufficient argument against the propriety of an allowance of such gain as might enable the poor not only to subsist, but to enjoy some comfort in life.

How far there might be a possibility of bringing this about, is a political question, of which I can form no adequate judgment. But while things are in their present state, it must be deemed an indispensable obligation upon the rich, to lend assistance to the poor, besides those parish charges which they cannot withhold, and which too often, perhaps, only keep life in existence, without affording it any other comfort. A benevolent-minded man will derive satisfaction from contributing to the happiness of others. If he enjoys prosperity, he feels his heart raised in thankfulness to that Being, from whose goodness he receives all the temporal blessings of life; he will consider that it is not for him alone that the sun shines, and the spring puts forth all its beauties, but

that the lower ranks of life are equally the care of the Eternal Parent; and that in the endeavour to diffuse happiness amongst others, he increases his own.

The present state of luxury is by some reckoned useful, by increasing employment; but if we consider its prevalence through all the middle ranks of life, we shall rather conclude, that to support it, many are led to "grind the face of the poor," and impose on those who labour for them unnecessary burdens, instead of that reasonable portion of work which should procure a maintenance.

18*th*, 7*th M°*.—This day, there has been a little refreshing rain, after two weeks of the hottest weather we have had for many years in this country. The thermometer rose to above 80°, most days, and was frequently between 80° and 84°; sometimes 85° or 86°, and once near 87°. We observed it generally rise higher upon being put out of doors (though in the shade) than it was within; the sky was uncommonly clear most of the time, and there had been a great want of rain before the hot weather commenced.

1794.

5th, 1*st M°*.—A NEW year has commenced. The alarm has been often sounded in our ears during the last few months; sometimes amounting to almost prophetic warnings. We have had line upon line, and precept upon precept, accompanied with lively exhortations, to consider the importance of religion, and to submit to its humbling influence in the regulation of our lives and conduct. That her ways are pleasant, and her paths peace, I believe is in degree experienced, as we feel a resignation to the divine will concerning us.

11*th*, 9*th M°*.—To watch our own spirits, is an injunction which, I believe, we shall often find it necessary to practise, in our intercourse through life. Many of the little trials and mortifications to which we are so frequently liable, seem in a peculiar manner to call forth the exercise of this duty. If we are taken unprepared, we are less able to withstand any assaults of the enemy; and what can keep us in a state of preparation, but a constant watch over our own spirits, and a supplication of soul to Him who can alone sustain and strengthen us? If we use our

best endeavours to maintain this watchfulness, and have but faith to pray for an increase of strength, in due time we shall feel its efficacy. And though, upon application to be cleansed from our spiritual leprosy, we may not immediately receive the answer of, "I will, be thou clean,"* yet, I believe, as we patiently wait in faith, we shall experience the purification to go forward, and those evil tempers and inclinations to be subdued, which would be a hindrance to our admission into the realms of everlasting light and peace. But, "we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing"† is not unfrequently the discouraging language of our souls. We have struggled much with temptation, we have taken up the cross to many of our natural propensities, and endeavoured, at times, to subdue those evil tempers, which we have seen have proceeded from a corrupt root; and after all, feel so much of the old leaven remaining, that we are almost ready to conclude we are but where we first began. Yet, I believe there is room to hope, that our labour and conflicts have not been wholly in vain: we may feel ourselves far short of what we might have expected, and therefore be almost ready to despair of

* Luke, v. 13. † Luke, v. 5.

conquering the enemies of our souls; but if we take a review, we shall perhaps, be obliged to acknowledge that we have sometimes given way, instead of endeavouring to stand our ground. We have neglected the silent, gentle admonition, that has sometimes warned us to flee from danger, at other times, to collect all our forces, and stand against it, in the confidence of His strength, who is all-sufficient: we have given way to a perverse temper, or a hasty ill-humour, a disposition to retaliate, or render evil for evil, instead of patiently bearing those allotments which have fallen to our share. Thus have our souls' enemies gained strength to renew the conflict after many battles, and to excite the painful suggestion that we have fought but in vain. But let not our faith fail. Though we have toiled for a long season with so little benefit, yet let us renew our diligence at the command of the Master, not doubting, that as we are obedient in faith, and watchful over our own spirits, we shall in due time experience his strength to enable us to overcome, and receive an abundant recompence for all our labours.

16*th*, 10*th* M°.—My mother Woods quietly

departed this life, in the ninety-third year of her age. She was down stairs, as usual, the evening before. Such an event must, at the time when it happens, be an affecting stroke to near relations, and we must feel the loss of a kind and affectionate parent, which she has ever been to all her family; but we scarcely ought to regret her release from a state of suffering, which seemed likely to increase at her advanced age; and I believe she has for some time back rather wished than feared a change. To those who have lived well, death loses much of its terror, and they look forward with a comfortable persuasion of entering upon a state of more permanent happiness than this world can bestow.

5*th*, 11*th* *M°*.—Yesterday morning, Thomas Scattergood sat about an hour with us, in the course of a family visit to the members of our meeting. An extraordinary man in the line of spiritual communications, and his mind evidently covered with that love, whose attractive influence powerfully operates on the minds of his hearers.

11*th* *M°*.—Observation will lead us to con-

clude, that many people practise religion as a task, without any idea of receiving pleasure from the exercise of devotion. They are willing sometimes to go to a place of worship, and perform some religious duties, because they think it reputable in the eyes of the world, or believe that something is necessary to be done, to enable them to get to heaven; but any steps beyond this they are unwilling to take.

It is not very likely that we shall make any progress in religion, while we consider it in this light, or that we are only serving a hard master. Love must be the prevailing motive that can render even temporal services acceptable, and certainly is not less necessary in our endeavours to please that Being who is continually calling for the whole heart, and who rejects even those offerings which are not accompanied with the affections of the soul.

If we believe in the goodness of God, we must consider his calling for our hearts as a proof that such a surrender is conducive to our happiness; and I believe, if we are but disposed to turn our hearts to him, and cherish the desire to feel the animating influence of divine love, we shall no longer

consider it as a task to worship and serve the Lord, but rather seek after a union with him as our highest felicity.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* "Love is the fulfilling of the law."† While divine love prevails, and we can say, under its sacred influence, I desire to do thy will, O Lord, we experience its supporting power to sustain us in all our difficulties, and through all the probations we may meet with in this state of existence, and have a degree of confidence, that though we may pass through the water, the billows will not overwhelm us; though we may pass through the fire, the flame shall not kindle upon us.

1795.

On the 25th of the 1st M°. the thermometer was only $2\frac{1}{2}$° out of doors, and on the 27th of the same, 43° out of doors. A rapid thaw had taken place in the preceding night; and the difference of climate within and without doors was so remarkable, that the rain and melted snow, which overflowed the gutters, and ran through the ceilings, froze as it ran

* Deut. vi. 5. † Rom. xiii. 10.

down the bed-curtains, and formed icicles at the bottom, and cakes of ice on the floor; neither of which completely thawed, till after the admission of outward air in the morning: the following day it froze again.

12*th*, 4*th M°*.—One can scarcely help sometimes making serious reflections on the awful state of public affairs at the present period. Every future prospect seems more than commonly precarious, and the calamities impending over us are frequently the subject of conversation.

How soon the ravages of war may be at our door, appears very uncertain; and the havoc it has already made of our fellow-subjects, must give rise to painful sensations in every feeling mind. Can we do any thing to avert the present, or ward off approaching evils? If not, the more still and quiet we keep ourselves during the present fermentation the better; endeavouring to rely solely on that power which can preserve us through all difficulties, and support the mind in calmness and resignation, though a reverse of fortune should be our lot.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."* This, if

* Isaiah, xxvi. 3.

we turn over the leaves of our past lives, we shall acknowledge to have been in measure experienced; and the more our faith is increased, the more disposition we shall feel to be resigned to all terrestrial things; and having food and raiment, therewith to be content.

30th, 7th M°.—"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* This was the language of the Psalmist; and when we behold the wonderful works of God in the creation, and consider how immense must be that power, which sustains and governs the universe, we are ready to conclude ourselves very insignificant in his sight. But, if his wisdom and goodness has seen meet to create us, we may rest in faith, that he will not think us beneath his care; and when we consider the union of the soul and body, and our alliance with the spiritual world, we are certainly not the least wonderful part of the visible creation. We are perhaps made but "a little lower than the angels," and, with regard to our dominion over all other crea-

* Psalm viii. 3.

tures of this earth, "crowned with glory and honour." There seems then, no room for despondency; but relying, with faith, on Him who formed us, we should endeavour to cultivate that spiritual union, which will exalt us to a better state. Thus filling up, as we ought, our appointed station in this life, to the praise of Him who created us, we may look forward with hope to a more glorious and durable habitation, when all things elementary shall vanish from our sight.

1796.

17th, 1st M°.—My son, "get wisdom."* This was the advice of a wise man formerly, who well knew the value of true wisdom, and the insignificance of every thing else in the comparison. Something similar to this is the exhortation, Be religious, encourage in yourselves the love of God. Consider yourselves as under his omniscient eye, and let all your actions be regulated by that wisdom which comes from above.

This language often seems to breathe through my soul to the multitude, as well as to individuals. Through all the varieties of forms and shadows, and every thing external,

* Prov. iv. 5.

I feel as if I could unite myself in the bonds of love and union, with all those who seriously desire and endeavour to please God. To be religious, includes a great deal. It is not only to be morally good, but to be good from a principle of love to God, and the desire to do that which will be acceptable in his sight. To be religious, implies the performance of our duty both to God and man; and though we may consider religion, in the first instance, as subsisting between God and our own souls, yet all the various duties of life must flow from it, and are as necessarily produced by it, as good fruit is produced by a good tree. Therefore, under whatever appearance, or whatever external form or mode of worship, let real, vital religion operate in your hearts, and influence your lives and conduct. You will find it give additional pleasure to the innocent enjoyments of life, afford consolation in the hours of grief and anxiety, and give that hope of a better state, the sweetness of which is the only thing that can make this life desirable.

24th, 5th M°.—Draw me, O Lord, and I will run after thee. This is frequently the language of my spirit, when humbled under a sense of my own weakness, and the inability

I feel either to think a good thought, or perform a good act, without divine assistance. Still less do I feel power to draw near to the Father of Spirits, without some prevalence of that holy influence on the soul, which can enable us to cry, Abba, Father. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him."* This is the language of Scripture; and I believe many may acknowledge, that it is through this divine energy or influence that they have been brought to believe in Christ inwardly revealed in the heart, and witnessed his power, as far as it was given way to, to preserve them from all evil, and become their sanctification and redemption. Historical evidence may tend to confirm our faith, and enable us to give a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. But the history of the life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour, as recorded by the Evangelists, if it gains no other assent of the mind, than that which arises from the evidence of outward testimony, will, I believe, have but little influence in purifying the heart; and it is in the simplicity of little children, desiring to be instructed, that we shall behold Christ pointed out to us as our guide and director,

* John, vi. 44.

an inward spiritual teacher, who will lead us into all truth.

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."* This text, taken in an exact, literal sense, may seem strange; for why should it be cause of thankfulness, that the way of salvation should be hid from wisdom and prudence? What it appears to me to imply, is, a thankfulness that human wisdom and prudence were not the means to find out Christ; for then indeed, would he be found by but few; but that in a state of innocence and simplicity, his power would be revealed, and known to preserve even the wayfaring man and the fool from erring in the way of salvation.

On 3d day evening, the 30th of 8th M°. my father departed this life, in the eightieth year of his age. I was in the room with him at the awful closing scene, which was quite quiet.

To be prepared for the same solemn change, is a wish that seems naturally to arise in the mind from such an event. Every connexion in life that is thus broken, is a warning to ourselves; and I believe it is ra-

* Matt. xi. 25.

ther profitable to indulge the meditations arising from such a scene, than too hastily to turn from the house of mourning. A view of surrounding life convinces us that many trials must occur in our passage through it, and observation may likewise lead to the conclusion, that it will be more conducive to happiness to endeavour to arm our minds with fortitude to bear with calmness those that may fall to our lot, than to endeavour to flee from every thing that disturbs us. I am far from pleading the propriety of imposing unnecessary trials upon ourselves, or courting scenes of affliction, which can be attended with no use; but I believe, if we studiously endeavour to avoid every trouble for ourselves, that we do not immediately see can be productive of benefit to others, we shall be in danger of drawing the line so close, as to be likely to omit what might prove to our satisfaction.

On 3d day morning, the 6th of 9th M°. we attended my father's funeral at Winchmore-hill.

29th, 10th M°.—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

* Psalm xlvi. 1.

Happy it is for us, if we can adopt this as a truth, in our own experience, and in the hours of trouble and anxiety rest our minds upon God, as a sure refuge, a counsellor to guide us, and a comforter to relieve our distress. Few of us pass through life without many probations; many trials of our faith and patience; during which seasons we feel the necessity of divine aid, to assist us in our struggles, and enable us to get through them. Often may the dependant soul adopt the language, Whom have we in heaven but thee, or in the earth in comparison of thee? We feel as if we must be miserable if we could not apply to God as our friend, with a confidence that he will look down upon us with compassion, and be our never-failing support in the hour of trouble. Often in the course of my life have I found the consolation arising from this faith. When my mind has been clouded by disappointment, when I have looked at the past with regret, or forward with an anxious solicitude; how often has my perturbed mind been calmed by casting my care upon Him who careth for us, and who often out of seeming evil produces most solid good. Oh that I may but be preserved in uprightness, is the language of my spirit; and cherishing a resignation of mind

to the all-wise Disposer of events, may I be enabled to be thankful in prosperity, and patient in adversity, looking forward with hope to that final period when both must terminate, and to be prepared for which is the only object of importance!

28*th*, 11*th M°*.—I have been confined to the house about a fortnight with a feverish disorder; during which time, as well as at other periods of indisposition, I have been led to the consideration how little can be done in such a state towards preparing ourselves for a future existence. Indeed, in times of sickness and debility, it appears to me that we can do little more than pray for patience and resignation, for submission of our will to the Divine will, whatever it may be, respecting us. Do thou, O Lord, direct, and then all things will be for the best. Whether sickness or health, life or death, thou knowest best what will be for good to ourselves or others. We are short-sighted, but thine eye comprehends all things. We are weak and ignorant, thou hast all knowledge and power. What can we do but trust in thee, praying for the forgiveness of our sins, and that we may find mercy and acceptance with thee.

1797.

13*th*, 1*st* M°.—That God is good, we must believe, or be wretched; for what can poor weak man look to, as a source of hope and consolation, but infinite goodness? When we look round and behold the beauties of creation, and the numberless sources of varied blessings from which pleasure may be derived, we shall perhaps feel a ready assent of the mind to the truth that God is good. But we sometimes take a different view of the picture. We behold sickness, pain and poverty, distress and anguish in various shapes; war, famine and pestilence, perhaps, form not a very distant view. Whilst contemplating such scenes, we may be almost ready to query, where is the Lord? or be tempted to fear, that whilst such things are permitted, his goodness extendeth not to us. But I believe, by looking into ourselves we shall be more ready to acknowledge the goodness of God, than from any outward observation. We have received blessings for which we have felt our hearts raised in thankfulness; we have experienced support and consolation in the hour of trial; many secret warnings to escape from evil, and suggestions to pursue

good; and the all-sustaining hope, that we are travelling to a better country for which this state of pilgrimage is only a preparation. And if upon a serious review of ourselves the evidence appear clear that God is good, we may reasonably suppose that other individuals, in the examination of their own experiences, will come to the like conclusion; notwithstanding that their outward situations, in the eyes of others, may appear to militate against it. I mean not to infer that happiness, any more than other things, is equally distributed; some have evidently a larger portion than others; but our sources of comfort lie very much within our own breasts, and are often not laid open to outward observation.

The designs of God in the government of the world are beyond our comprehension. Of his infinite power and wisdom, we have evidence that can admit of no doubt; and the more we look into ourselves, the more ready we shall be to acknowledge his mercy and goodness. This faith will enable us to love him more perfectly, and as our love increases, we shall be more and more sensible of his goodness, and of its extension to the whole human race.

2d, 4th M°.—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* If this text were deeply impressed on our minds, I think it would lead to great caution in our various steppings through life. And it appears to me not only applicable to our religious concerns, but may often be seen verified in the things belonging to this life. That causes produce effects, is a position to which we are generally disposed to assent. If a man be careful to sow good seed in his ground, he looks forward with the expectation that he shall reap the same; for though "the race is not (always) to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,"† yet where it is not so, we consider it as something extraordinary, and not conformable to that, which we might in the common course of things expect. Various circumstances may occur between seed-time and harvest, which may prevent a man's expectations from being fully answered; but yet care and labour are generally blessed with a degree of success; if it were not so, we should feel but poor encouragement for our activity in the endeavour to remove the evils relative either to the body or mind. But such as we sow we may expect to reap. If we indulge pride and self-conceit, the

* Gal. vi. 7. † Eccl. ix. 11.

fruit we shall reap will most likely be contempt; if we give way to malevolence and ill-humour, we shall find the fruit it produces will be the dislike of those who feel its influence. If we are kind and beneficent, we expect to meet with love in return. To these things we, in general, readily assent; but yet we are not sufficiently attentive always to sow good seed. The cause and the effect are frequently at a distance from each other, and we do not properly consider what fruit will be produced by sowing any corrupted seed. Sometimes we have almost forgotten what seed we sowed, till the badness of what we reap leads to retrospection; at others, we perhaps repent, after having sown the bad, and would do all in our power to eradicate it; but this is almost as difficult as for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots; and notwithstanding our endeavours, we shall most likely find that some of the evil seed remains to be reaped. Often, very often, in the review of either our own lives, or those of others, we may trace good or bad effects to their respective causes; and I often feel a zeal that the young and thoughtless might be aware of the danger of sowing such seed as they would not wish to reap; that they would consider their ways,

and be wise, and by a prudent and circumspect conduct, guard against those effects, which sooner or later they will be brought to lament.

4th, 6th M°.—David, expressing his faith in the power of God, says, "Though an host should encamp against me, mine heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."* This is the language of strong faith and confidence in the protection of our Heavenly Father. But notwithstanding the caution of our Saviour to his disciples, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled,"† I believe many of us are ready to fear and tremble, lest we should fall in the day of battle: and when the judgments of the Lord seem more peculiarly in the earth, and we hear the warning voice to try our foundations, and consider how we are prepared to stand the shocks of adversity, we are many of us humbled under a sense of our own weakness, and in earnest breathings of soul to Him who can alone help, petition that we may neither spiritually nor temporally fall by the hand of the enemy, but be enabled to bear those trials

* Psalm xxvii. 3. † Matt. xxiv. 6.

and temptations which may fall to our lot. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"* was the query formerly. I should only dare to reply, like Ezekiel, to the question, "Son of man, can these bones live?" "Lord God, thou knowest."† If I am enabled to drink the bitter cup, it must be through thy power strengthening my weakness; for though to will is present with me, how to perform that which I will (or desire) I know not. That thou, O Lord, wouldst be pleased to look down upon us with mercy, forgive us our transgressions, and compassionate our infirmities, is the prayer of the truly humbled soul. And whether we are supported by confidence, or depressed by fear, still enable us to believe, that as we are endeavouring to trust in thee, and to look towards the mountain of thy holiness, nothing will ever be able to separate us from thy love.

14*th*, 7*th M°*.—"A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."‡ There appear several reasons why a prophet is more likely to receive honour from strangers,

* Matt. xx. 22. † Ezek. xxxvii. 3. ‡ Mark, vi. 4.

than from his own family, or from those amongst whom he dwells. One perhaps, arises from the depravity of our nature, which is apt to behold with envy an equal raised above us, either by temporal or spiritual gifts; another more obvious reason is, that the failings and weaknesses of a person residing amongst us, are so frequently under our notice, that it prevents our holding him in such high estimation, as if we saw only his bright side. This latter remark could not be applicable to our Saviour, in whom no imperfection could be found; but I believe it frequently operates in our minds to the disparagement of his followers, who though called to preach the same truths that he taught, and desirous to follow his footsteps, yet are at times so under the dominion of a corrupt nature, that they seem far distant from that perfection to which pure religion must ultimately tend. A commonly adopted language is, 'I have no opinion of such a one's religion, if it does not teach him to keep his passions in subjection, to fill up every station of life with propriety, to be meek, humble, &c.' in short, if it does not teach him to be perfect. Religion will, no doubt, teach all this to those who are endeavouring to be subject to it; but it is often

by slow degrees that the old corrupt nature is put off, and the new nature brought to perfection; and whether this work is, or is not going forward in others, we can form but an inadequate judgment; neither if we observe in a person many faults, can we judge how they might be multiplied, if it were not for some influence from religion. The prophetic, or any other office in the Church, we cannot suppose should be filled by any but those who are in a good measure redeemed from evil, and if such are sometimes held in superior honour by strangers, it seems no cause for self-exaltation; and it may have a tendency to keep them in humility, to consider, that it may in part arise from their not meeting with so many occurrences to throw them off their guard, and that those failings and imperfections remain concealed, which are often obvious to those whom they are more generally with.

At Hastings, 17*th*, 9*th M°*.—The constant pursuit of pleasure, however innocent, I believe has a tendency to dissipate the mind; and though rambling about a beautiful country, contemplating the charms of nature, and the grandeur of the boundless ocean, may sometimes lead our minds to the great Au-

thor of all, to Him who made the sea roar and the fulness thereof, yet we too frequently admire his works, without considering the greatness of his power, and reverently worshipping him: being led on from the things that are visible, to contemplate with an eye of faith, those more glorious scenes which shall be revealed hereafter. For, if so much power is displayed for the use of the material creation, which is but the subordinate part, how much more glorious will be the display of infinite power in the spiritual creation, when "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality."*

20th, 11th M°.—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."† If the righteous can only lay hold on this promise, who shall dare to say, it belongeth unto me? But when this text has been revived in my mind, it has often been accompanied with a consolatory hope, that though we cannot claim, as our due, a deliverance from trouble, yet that the mercy of God is extended to those who put their trust in him, that he will in his own time pour healing balm into the wounded

* I Cor. xv. 54. † Psalm xxxiv. 19.

soul, and sometimes deliver us from affliction, even when hope seems ready to fail. And often has the dependant soul been led to acknowledge, that blessings have been dispensed to us in the form of afflictions; they have had a tendency to humble our minds and subdue self, and brought us into that state of resignation and trust in God, that, even respecting those things which appear most desirable, we can almost say, "Thy will be done."

1798.

25th, 3d M°.—'We get forward by little and little.' This sentiment was expressed by an esteemed friend, in answer to a remark of mine, and made such an impression on my mind, that it has been often since revived in my remembrance with the persuasion of its truth. Yet we are sometimes ready to despise this slow progress, as much as Naaman, the Assyrian, did dipping in Jordan. We want to do something of consequence, or something that seems manifestly to put us forward; thus we too often neglect the little good we might do in one thing, and the little matter we might set to rights in another, because they seem so trifling, as to be hardly

worth our attention; not sufficiently considering that every little will bring us forward, though by almost imperceptible degrees; and that if we neglect these small advancements, we shall be in danger of falling by little and little, in the same proportion that we might otherwise have got forward. Every conquest that we gain over ourselves, every effort of the mind to cleave to the good and avoid the evil, even though it be but in little things, is accompanied with some efficacy; and if we are habituated to constant discipline and watchfulness, we shall find an increase of strength beyond what we could expect.

25th, 5th M°.—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of,"* was the gentle reproof to the disciples formerly; and may we, in our turn, who are disposed to censure, endeavour to weigh well what spirit we are of, and keep down a disposition to retaliate!

Evidence is continually arising, that weakness is ours; and if the decree is constantly going forth, cut off, cut off, till nothing but what is whole and sound remains, I believe the reduction will be to a small number indeed: and how often have we cause to lament,

* Luke, ix. 55.

that those most zealous to pull the mote out of a brother's eye, are seen by impartial observers, to have a beam in their own. How consolatory to some minds, was the expression of a friend, this morning, that the end or design of discipline was to reclaim. Sensible of the benefit accruing to young minds from a religious education, and firmly persuaded of the advantages arising from many of the restrictions of our Society, some of us who are parents, cannot but regret the disposition prevalent in some friends, to draw the cords of discipline so tight, as to endanger the exclusion of our families from membership in that communion, where we have believed them surrounded by a particular hedge of preservation, from many of the temptations to which others are more exposed.

I believe there are some of us who may have wished for more conformity in our children, to the simplicity of appearance amongst friends, from a belief in the propriety of it, and its tendency to preserve them from many snares, who can yet conscientiously say, that we have not seen it right to impose positive restrictions, or exert an undue influence over them.

24th, 6th M°.—"Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken."—"Is it not

good, if peace and truth be in my days?"* This was the language of Hezekiah, when forewarned by the prophet Isaiah, of the dreadful calamities that should befal his posterity. How different often are the feelings of my mind, when I consider the perturbed state of things in the present day! I seem as if I could cope with many evils myself, if I could but see the prosperity of my descendants; yet I dare not for them, any more than for myself, covet riches or long life. I rather feel desirous that they may be preserved in that state most conducive to their good; not possessed of such riches as may make them in danger of being lifted up, and forgetting God, the author of all their blessings, nor in that state of poverty which is hard to be borne, and may tempt them to deviate from integrity of conduct. Resignation to the all-wise Disposer of events, respecting our children as well as ourselves, is a desirable attainment. But it is difficult to consider ourselves as pilgrims and sojourners on the earth, having here no continuing city. Often, when we are favoured to see what our state should be, we may lament how far distant we are from it: yet, if we can but say, we are, through divine assistance, endeavour-

* II Kings, xx. 19.

ing to press after the mark, we may hope that we shall meet with acceptance from Him who knows our infirmities, and remembers that we are but dust.

1799.

1*st*, 2*d M°*.—Often are our fairest prospects of satisfaction blasted in a moment. We see, and sometimes feel, that nothing here is permanent; yet, though we can moralise on the subject, we seem scarcely able to support the shock, when the reality comes home to ourselves. May we profit by the sufferings allotted us, is frequently the prayer of my soul; and whether we drink the bitter, or enjoy the sweet, may we receive either as from the hand of a merciful Father, and with true, patient submission, adopt the language of Him, whose example we ought to follow, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Very little room is there for those who have families, to suppose that their cares will lessen as their children grow up and settle for themselves: often, I believe, there is an increase of care and anxiety to those who wish to render themselves useful, and take an active part in life; and without interest-

ing ourselves in the welfare and happiness of others, how insipid must every thing appear respecting this world!

3d M°.—The love of liberty and independence is strongly implanted in the human mind. How far it should be indulged in the education and conduct of youth, will, by many people, be differently determined. Some parents throw the reins on the necks of their children at a very early period, and hold them with a very slack hand; while others seem scarcely willing to loosen them a little, so long as they are able to keep hold of them. Either extreme, I believe, is prejudicial. Too tight a curb sometimes makes young people fret under it, and produces an impatience to be entirely free, when more gentle discipline might have produced submission.

Little benefit can arise from mere compulsion, either in doing or forbearing, further than as it may gain time for the understanding and judgment to ripen; and if they can be kept in the practice of good, and preserved from evil, till that time, it will be a great point gained. The body acquires strength, and the power of its own movements, but by slow degrees; and the mind still more slowly: both want the assistance of superior strength

and intellect, to bring them forward, and instruct them in the means necessary to attain the end they aim at.

I believe there are few who are arrived at years of maturity, who, in looking back, could wish to have been in a state of absolute liberty at a very early period. We may observe many instances where the effects of it are to be lamented. And the consideration that effects will follow causes, and often such effects from early imprudence, as cannot be remedied through future life, should be an inducement to parents to exert all their influence to guard their children, as much as possible, from those things which have a tendency to evil: it may be impossible to do it wholly, without incurring the danger of greater evil, and we should endeavour, as their years increase, rather to enlighten their judgments than exercise authority. A thief, or a liar, however sincerely he may repent of his misconduct, will find it a long while before he can gain that confidence and esteem, which, as a virtuous character, he would always have enjoyed. The considering part of the world, knowing how difficult it is to eradicate the root of evil, will not hastily depend upon that tree bringing forth good fruit, which has been accustomed to bring

forth bad. There is too much deception in the world for us immediately to credit every appearance, and many proofs of repentance and amendment will be requisite, before confidence can be re-established. It is in some degree the same with faults of less magnitude. If repentance could immediately set all our failings to rights, it would perhaps not be of equal importance to guard against them; but very often no repentance or future conduct can rectify the effects our errors have produced; and things are so dependant on each other, that we may have to mourn through our future lives the errors and mistakes of our youth. A man's principles and practice have often an influence entirely beyond his power and control: if they have been bad, and he come to a state of repentance, he may mourn their baneful effects through his future life, when, perhaps, all his efforts can do but little in setting them to rights. This view of things should not lead us to continual fear and irresolution respecting the guidance of our children. Having once weighed matters well, considered the evil and the good, and sought the best advice, we should endeavour, either in restraint or indulgence, to pursue our best judgment, and trust to the event. But we should take care that selfishness, or

our own gratification does not predominate in influencing the conduct of our children; more particularly that other motives are not held forth, while the true one is concealed. They will soon see through deceptions of this sort, and may be led to suspicion in cases where zeal for their good solely operates.

25th, 4th M°.—Many are the seasons of anxiety and solicitude we have to pass through in this state of existence, and how far they may be profitable or necessary to our well-being we know not. Of one thing we may rest assured, that we are under the government of a wise and good Being, who knows much better what is good for us than we do ourselves; and perhaps scarcely any of us can take a retrospective view of our own lives, without acknowledging that mercy has been mixed with judgment, and that, even in seasons when we have been most tried, he has sometimes been graciously pleased to pour in the balm of consolation.

12th, 5th M°.—We live but to die, seems a motto written in my mind, and which has frequently of late been brought before my view. Those whose lives are most desirable, have frequently the thread of their existence cut

at an early period, whilst the less useful and the less virtuous remain longer on the stage. But we may remember, that those who are most fit to live, are most fit to die, and console ourselves with the thought that if such go, it is to enjoy a better inheritance.

12*th*, 6*th* *M°*.—Last 4th day, attended our monthly meeting as usual. It was the time for answering some of the queries, and that respecting love being preserved amongst us, produced (as is generally the case) much doubt and hesitation. I have often been led to query, what state can we be in, to occasion so much difficulty in answering it? or, are other people's ideas respecting it, different from mine? If, as an individual, I can look round upon all the members of our meeting, that I have any knowledge of, with the disposition to help them, either spiritually or temporally, as occasion may offer, I should not think it presumption to give an answer, that love is preserved, believing it all that the query can imply. And if, upon reflection, we, as individuals, feel ourselves in this state, will it not lead to the charitable conclusion that others are so likewise, unless any thing is obvious to the contrary. But if a particular affection for our own

members, or a zeal to promote their welfare, is understood as the import of the query, then no wonder such difficulty should arise. "Be kindly affectioned one to another,"* is a Scripture precept; but, like most other precepts, to be useful, it must be brought into common life, and habitually influence our conduct. Speculatively to consider it, and acknowledge its divine origin, will do but little good: it must be ready on every occasion to operate as an antidote to self-love; and when we feel a disposition to take offence, or think ourselves in any respect injured, if we did but allow ourselves a minute's recollection, and consider how far we were fulfilling the precept, it would have a tendency to calm our disturbed minds, lead us to contemplate with pity, rather than anger, the weaknesses of human nature, and excuse the failings of each other with brotherly love.

Here we should feel that charity, which is disposed to cover the multitude of sins; and to be kindly affectioned one to another, would flow from it as a stream from the fountain.

Many are the warnings we have, that this frail tabernacle is wearing out by degrees,

* Rom. xii. 10.

even though we may enjoy a good share of health and strength. Should it not lead us to consider how far we are prepared for its final dissolution? To endeavour as far as we are able to set to rights what has been amiss, and press forward towards the mark of the prize of our high calling.

3d, 11*th M°*.—The corruption of human nature is a subject that has been much dwelt on by some writers, particularly by two late authors. By others it has been controverted: partly on the ground of its being derogatory to the glory of Him who created us, by debasing human nature; and that to find fault with the building, is only another way of finding fault with the architect. Perhaps seriously to consider our state, may be always profitable, but rather let us consider it as it is, than as our *mighty wisdom* may see meet it should be. The depravity of mankind in general, in a greater or less degree, is too obvious to be controverted: and I believe, if we take a review of ourselves, and candidly appeal to our own feelings, we shall acknowledge that we cannot look back to the period when we could say, that we had no evil thoughts, and no propensities to evil.

If, from the earliest period of remembrance, we were not free from corruption, it seems to afford a strong presumptive proof that it is interwoven in our nature. But if we inherit corruption, we are assured that grace is given to us to counteract its operations: that the evil begins to work, no sooner than its antidote is at hand. And perhaps this is most conducive to our happiness, and best calculated to prepare us for a happy immortality, the original and continued design of our present state of existence. According to the Scripture account, man was but a short time in Paradise, before he fell by a transgression of the divine law.

Even in this state, wherein the Almighty pronounced that all was good, our first parents, before the entrance of actual sin and death, were no doubt (though in a state of innocence) in some degree weak and helpless, or they would not so soon have forfeited their happy situation, by yielding to the first temptation. And may we not suppose that our all-wise Creator, who sees through futurity, and knoweth all things, foresaw that the fall of man, with the antidote already prepared, even "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,"* would best an-

* Revelations, xiii. 8.

swer his gracious designs respecting us, in preparing us for glory, honour, and immortality.

The fall of man is a standing lesson to us not to endeavour to be wise beyond what our Maker designed us, nor to trust in our own strength; but humbly apply to Him, who is ever willing to lend succour to his dependant creatures, and simply fulfil his commands, though they may appear to militate against our preconceptions of what might be for our benefit. A firm faith and reliance on God, with the persuasion that this probationary state is adapted to promote our final happiness hereafter, is the only thing that reconciles us to either the physical or moral evil that is in the world. We may fancy that He who has all power, could have made us better and happier than we are at present: that, in short, we might have been angels instead of men. But we who are *formed*, can very little enter into the designs of the *Former*, further than he is pleased to reveal them; and Scripture, reason, and our own feelings, all unite in leading us to the conviction, that so much has been done for us, that we may rest secure in the faith, that He who formed man still careth for him, and imparts that grace and strength which will enable him to struggle

with, and, in due time, to overcome the corruptions of nature, and make us more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

1800.

12th, 3d M°.—"LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."* Whether engaged in the necessary business of life, or in the gratification of its innocent enjoyments, the immortal spirit that thirsteth for God, returns to him again, as its proper centre. As the dove sent forth from the ark, before the waters were dried up, could find no rest for the sole of her foot, and returned to it again, so we, after our various excursions, find nothing solid to rest on, and return again to Him who is the only sure resting-place.

And will it not be wisdom, sometimes to inquire whether, in our various excursions, we have kept within the prescribed limits of the holy inclosure, lest, by stepping beyond the bounds, we should get entangled in the floods of temptation that surround us, and be scarcely able to find our way back to our Father's house. That every word and thought may be brought into judgment, and our sins blotted out from the book of remem-

* Psalm xxvi. 8.

brance, must be the prayer of every devout soul.

Sensible, O Lord, that we have none in heaven but thee, nor in the whole earth, in comparison of thee, we look forward with earnest hope and expectation, that when these frail bodies are laid in the dust, we may have a dwelling-place with thee for ever; in that habitation which our souls have loved, and which we have considered as our chiefest good.

6th, 5th M°.—Yesterday, we went to Winchmore-hill, to the interment of our dear little one,* and remain, with painful anxiety, watching the progress of the same disease in her father.

9th.—The prospect of his recovery is a subject for thankfulness; and often in our most trying seasons we have to acknowledge that mercy is mixed with judgment, or perhaps we should rather say, with our afflictions; for we are too short-sighted to distinguish the one from the other, relative to any thing in this world; and I think I never felt liberty to put up an unqualified prayer for the life of those most dear

* A grandchild of the writer.

to me, believing that I should pray for I knew not what; perhaps for evil to them, as well as to myself.

18*th.*—

" Friends counsel quick dismission of our grief:
" Mistaken kindness! our hearts heal *too soon.*
" Are *they* more kind than *He* who struck the blow?
" Who bid it do his errand in our hearts."

And what is the errand it should accomplish in my heart? What counsel does it give? What instruction does it convey? The above lines have been often brought to my recollection, and I have wished to let the query sink deep into my mind.

The uncertainty of this world's happiness, and the awfulness of futurity, are subjects that I often ponder. They are now feelingly brought before me: not as a new or a strange thing, but such as are frequently presented to our view in the course of human events. Do I feel myself too strongly attached to the blessings of life; too apt to be engrossed by its enjoyments, and occupied by its cares? I wish not to flinch from any retrospective view of myself, but to profit by every dispensation; not to put aside the inquiry, with the idea that the affliction,

though I must bear a part in it, is designed for the benefit of others, more than for me; but I desire that every individual may receive with resignation, the allotted portion, and endeavour to profit therewith. Not by encouraging a disposition to reject future gratifications that may be offered us, because they may be soon withdrawn, for "Our thanks are cold for blessings unenjoyed;" but from the consideration that we are under the government of a wise and good Being, who can order every thing for us better than we can for ourselves, and who, we are assured, "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."* I believe it will always be a pleasing reflection, that we have loved with tenderness, any near relatives who have been removed from us; that we have promoted their welfare and happiness as much as lay in our power, and have never wanted to call in the aid of duty to stimulate us to any of our exertions. To have loved so well, must make the parting bitter; but the feelings of regret where this has not been the case, or that we have any thing to reproach ourselves with, must be still more bitter.

7th M°.—[Birth and death of a second

* Lam. iii. 33.

grandchild.]—Thus vanish human joys! Let us remember that sorrows too have an end. If human joys are transient, so likewise in degree are human sorrows. An alternate change seems to be the lot of our nature. If a large portion of affliction has fallen to our lot, may we not look forward with the hope, that brighter days will beam upon us in future? I can remember from an early period, that the ardour of prosperity, and the bitterness of adversity, have both been tempered by contemplating the vicissitudes of life. Perhaps, sometimes more effectually than from the consideration, that "here we have no continuing city:"* for, however short may be the span of our existence here, when compared to eternity, yet to look forward to years of sorrow, unallayed by hope, would be almost beyond human nature to support. To submit with patience and resignation, is the counsel given by philosophy as well as by religion: and may we avail ourselves of the consolation which the latter holds forth, considering that He who afflicts can also heal; and that, in the emphatical language of Scripture, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them."†.

* Heb. xiii. 14. † Isaiah, lxiii. 9.

16*th*, 11*th* *M°*.—On third-day morning, there were two couple married at Devonshire-house meeting. This morning there were two persons buried from Gracechurch-street meeting; the latter circumstance more singular than the former. We can hardly cast our eyes around us on the world, without observing on the one hand mirth and gaiety; on the other, mourning and lamentation. These different scenes seem the allotment of humanity; and we shall be "eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage," until the end come. Often as my thoughts revolve, do I look back to last May-day, when the voice of mirth was heard in the streets; and within doors, mourning and sorrow. Yet not a sorrow without hope, and a desire patiently to acquiesce in the will of Him, who, we may trust, orders all things for the best. And how transient is the May-day mirth of the milk-maid and poor chimney-sweeper! They play and dance one day in the year, and perhaps are confined to hard labour most of the rest. Surely, to the life of the latter, we should prefer an early grave, either for ourselves or our posterity.

1801.

1*st*, 1*st M°*.—This day commences a new century as well as a new year. With regard to public affairs, how gloomy is the aspect with which it enters? The ravages of war still continue, and without a prospect of peace: provisions so dear that famine seems almost to stare us in the face; even bread scarcely attainable for the poor, and it is only by extraordinary assistance, that they are enabled to live. But *hope*, that cordial of life, still accompanies us in our most dreary prospects. We *hope* that a plentiful harvest this year, will crown our wishes. We hope that pestilence will not follow famine, and that all things will take a better turn. And let us continue to hope, rather than repine; endeavouring to fill up with propriety our own allotment, and patiently acquiescing in those afflictive dispensations, whether public or private, which, under All-wise direction, are, no doubt, designed for good.

19*th*, 1*st M°*.—"Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Al-

mighty unto perfection?"* When we endeavour to raise our minds to the contemplation of the One Supreme, we often feel ourselves lost in wonder and amazement; for how can *finite* comprehend *infinite?* or, the creature, Him who created it? The more we attempt to fathom the wisdom and power of God, the more we get bewildered in our imaginations. If we can trace him in his works, his designs are wholly unknown to us any farther than he is pleased to reveal them; and when, from beholding the things that are visible, we are led by the eye of faith to see those that are invisible, we shall be inclined to adopt the language of the poet,

"Mankind was made to wonder and adore."

As the same sun, by his influence, hardens some bodies and melts others, according to the quality of the bodies on which it acts, so does the study of theology differently affect different minds. Some it seems to lead to scepticism; others to confidence. Our endeavour should be to steer a middle course. Not presumptuously determining what were the designs of Infinite Wisdom when he first created man, and placed him in Para-

* Job, xi. 7.

dise; and in his various subsequent dispensations to mankind, not deciding what it was fit he should do, or not do, but coming to him like little children, sensible of their want of knowledge, and willing to be instructed; desiring to walk in obedience as far as we know, and open to receive any farther revelations of his truth. We cannot contemplate the structure of our own bodies, without acknowledging with the Psalmist, that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," and much less can we comprehend the nature of the union which subsists between the soul and body. Even the structure and growth of a plant or tree that is daily before our eyes, how it unfolds and receives its nourishment, is beyond our conception; and many fancy they know, with certainty, those things which have puzzled ages and generations; and for any thing we can foresee, will still continue to involve the thinking part of mankind in the same perplexity. Will it not then be wiser to let those things rest, which are beyond our comprehension, than to enter into controversy respecting them, remembering the exhortation of the prophet, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to

love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."*

22d, 3d M°.—Religion seems so congenial to the mind of man, that we can scarcely doubt its being impressed by the hand of the Deity in his original formation. Almost all nations form ideas of something to reverence above nature: some invisible power that can punish their misconduct, or afford them protection in the hour of danger. The influences of religion are a source of consolation to most minds; and I believe, few are disposed to shake them off, but those who feel them at variance with their corrupt passions and inclinations. Where there are only some faint glimmerings of light, we may trust that but little will be expected; but where Divine knowledge is more diffused, a proportional improvement of the light afforded will be expected. The unlettered savage will not be judged by the law of the comparatively enlightened heathen, nor the heathen by the light of the Christian. This is the doctrine of revelation, and accords with our best reason and judgment. It will then be wise to consider the dispensation we are under, and the obligations it requires; for

* Micah, vi. 8.

we shall assuredly be accountable for the benefits that are offered to us, whether we receive or reject them. To the serious inquiring mind, we have every reason to believe that light will be afforded; and when anxiously solicitous that we may both believe and practise what is right, we may receive encouragement from these words of our Saviour, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."* To do his will by following the precepts laid down by Jesus Christ, is to obey the most excellent laws that can be framed to promote the happiness of mankind. To practise every virtue and to avoid every vice, to dwell in harmony and universal love. As we feel the disposition to endeavour to conform to such pure and heavenly doctrines, our minds will be enlightened to perceive that they must be of God; of Him who being intimately acquainted with the human heart, and all its evil propensities, best knows how to administer to its disordered state, and lead it by progressive steps to that purity, which fits the soul for immortal happiness.

I believe we shall find it most conducive to our benefit, to make use of every help that

* John, vii. 17.

is offered to us, to conduct us through this pilgrimage of life, this land of doubt and perplexity, of darkness and confusion. Every good gift cometh from God. Scripture, reason, and revelation, are all good in their proper places; but if we endeavour to exalt one by depreciating another, we shall lose the advantages that would be derived from their joint influences on the human mind. Many instances have occurred of people who have been led astray, by what they have thought supernatural impulses, even to the violation of the laws of common sense. I have no doubt, but that every Divine impulse will bear to be well weighed, and will never contradict our best reason and judgment. Many instances occur in our Society, of those who stamp their feelings very high, not uniting in their views of particular subjects that come before them. After all, a man's feelings can only properly operate on himself: if there is any subject on which he wishes to influence others, he must propose some motives besides his own feelings. For though when we respect a character, we may be disposed to a serious attention to his feelings, yet it must be by a coincidence with our own, and a consideration how far they agree with our ideas of wisdom and rectitude,

that we shall be brought to unite with him in sentiment; otherwise, we should indeed be led by a blind faith, which would not bear the test of any trial. We are at best, but poor short-sighted creatures, full of frailties and imperfections. Why we are placed in this vale of doubt and obscurity, prone to evil and struggling for good, He who has formed and placed us here best knows. Our business is, through the Divine aid afforded us, to overcome the evil, and press after the good: not by a confidence in our own strength, which has often been found to fail us in the time of need; but by a reliance on His power, who has promised his grace to the humble, and that he will guide the meek in judgment. Thus, praying for a right faith and a sound mind, we may press forward with hope, having a firm assurance, that when we have passed through this state of probation, and are entered into the vision of light, we shall then acknowledge that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

1*st*, 4*th* *M°*.—After the expostulation of

* I Cor. ii. 9.

Joshua with the children of Israel, he concludes thus: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* In the present day, there are not many heads of families who can come to such a declaration respecting their household, or even their children. I fear the most that many can say is, as for me, I will serve the Lord. Though I am very far from believing, that the anxious care and attention of parents, who are solicitous for the welfare of their offspring, will prove wholly in vain, yet independence, step by step, increases with their increasing years, and they are often tempted to take many wide excursions from the path which leads to safety and peace. At first, the deviations may be small, and not appear of much importance; but one step aside frequently leads to another, and we see the future so clouded by obscurity, that we are ready to fear what may be the issue. In this state of anxious solicitude for our children, we sometimes feel as if all the powers of exertion were suspended, and that we could only pray to Him, who can turn the hearts of all men at his pleasure, as a man turneth the water-courses in his field, that He would be pleased to impress their minds with a just sense of things,

* Josh. xxiv. 15.

and turn them from folly and vanity to the practice of religion and virtue. Indeed, to say or to do but little, is, I believe, often the best; and where counsel or exhortation seems proper, it should be given in the meekness of wisdom; for any thing like compulsion is so abhorrent to the human mind, that it often produces aversion to those things to which otherwise we should have no objection. However consolatory it may be to us to consider that we have done our duty, yet persons are little acquainted with the feelings of parents, who suppose they can rest contented with that alone. We shall rather wrestle with importunity for the blessing to descend on the heads of our children, and leave no stone unturned that may forward them in the right way. To have them walk in the line of moral duty, affords no small satisfaction; and we may hope, that where the ground is not overrun with weeds, there will be some room for good seed to be sown, and that the time may arrive, when we shall see the desire of our souls satisfied respecting them.

7th M°.—On the 20th, ——— departed this life, well prepared for a better, as far as we are capable of judging. Often does the

query arise in my mind, how am I prepared for the same awful change? I sometimes feel a languor, and a degree of oppression on my breath, that leads me to conclude that my constitution will not hold out to a late period; and I am much more solicitous that I may be ready when the time comes, than to have it lengthened out. To exist beyond our faculties, or the ability to do good, would be only a painful prospect.

The way to be prepared, is daily to do the business that comes before us, be it little or much. It is not always great things, or great actions, that are particularly beneficial; but to do as we ought what our hands find to do. Some may be ready to think within themselves, "I can do very little good; my sphere is too much contracted to afford much opportunity for usefulness." But this is not the point. Do we endeavour to walk with propriety in that sphere in which we move? Do we watch over our own spirits, and keep them in subjection? Do we set a good example in our little circle? Considering the eye of Omniscience as ever present, do we endeavour to do all things as in his sight? If we can review each day with the belief that we have done our best, and cultivated those dispositions that are acceptable to Him

who sees the heart, I believe, whether it has been the much, or the little that we have found to do, we shall in the end receive the welcome sentence of "Well done, good and faithful servant," "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."*

I think my aunt B——'s expressions to her surrounding family, when near the closing period, were, "See how a Christian can die, with hope and confidence in her God." I trust, many go equally well, who have not fortitude thus to express themselves, or confidence to utter such triumphant language: who though possessed of a degree of faith, and humble trust in the mercy of God, find it more needful for them to pray that they may be preserved in calmness to the end, than to call upon others to behold how they quit the stage. Yet I do not mean to infer that it was the language of presumption; in the recent instance, far from it. I should rather suppose it arose from the strong desire, that others might be encouraged to pursue the same path, from beholding its happy termination. Many have been the instances of those who could talk with composure of quitting every earthly connexion, and of feeling themselves wholly resigned to the

* Matt. xxv. 21.

Divine will. Others may have the same feelings, without that fortitude or command over their own sensations which is necessary to express them.

We often hear it queried respecting the deceased, was he or she sensible of their danger? That nothing was *expressed* by the parties, is all we can ever answer on such an occasion; of what they have *thought*, we can judge but little. Many seem to inquire, as if they concluded there was always something to do at the last; for my own part, I consider *that* as the time in which very little can be done. A good life is the best preparation for death; and though if we had a choice, it would most likely be, to be removed from this life in the performance of religious acts, or serious meditations, yet I never can consider it of importance, being fully persuaded, that if we are fit for heaven, we shall as easily gain admittance there, if taken suddenly from our lawful vocations, as if we were in the midst of heavenly consolations.

The account of the penitent thief encourages us to hope that mercy may be extended to the repenting sinner, even at the latest period. But we can little depend on a death-bed repentance; and I fear, if we

have not been careful to have a supply of oil ready for our lamps, all the hurry and bustle we may be in to procure it at the last, will not prevent the danger of having the doors shut against us.

13*th*, 9*th M°*.—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* This is the utmost extent of human confidence. Though the greatest trials and the heaviest afflictions fall to my lot, and every thing around me seems enveloped in impenetrable darkness, yet my trust in God faileth not; and I feel supported with that firm persuasion of mind, which enables me rely on his wisdom and goodness, even though he were to put an end to my existence. This seems to have been the confidence of Job, at a period when we have reason to believe there were only faint glimpses of that future state, which the gospel dispensation has now clearly revealed. Happy will it be for us, if in all the trials and afflictive dispensations we have to pass through, we can look up with the same confidence to Him who made us; for, if not in God, in whom, or in what can we trust? If we seriously look into ourselves, we shall perhaps be ready to acknowledge respecting

* Job, xiii. 15.

the past, what David anticipated with regard to the future, that, "surely, goodness and mercy" have followed us all the days of our lives. They have, in severe conflicts, whispered to our souls the language of peace; they have poured the balm of consolation into our wounded spirits; and when we have been ready to query, why am I thus afflicted? or from the obscurity that surrounds us, say, what doest thou?—the answer has been intelligibly conveyed to our minds: "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."*

In this confidence, O Lord, God of all mercy and goodness, enable us to approach the footstool of thy throne. Though what thou doest we know not now, neither can we comprehend it; yet we beseech thee, give us faith to believe that thy wisdom and goodness preside over all, and that the mysterious workings of thy providence are accomplishing those ends, which thy wisdom has designed. Touch our hearts with such a sense of thy love, that we may exclaim with the disciple, wash not only my feet, but my head and my hands also, if it will promote my having a part in thee. Grant that we may attend to every secret intimation of thy will

* John, xiii. 7.

respecting us; that we may go in and out before thee, as docile and obedient children, willing to be washed and purified from every thing that is offensive in thy sight. And feeling our own insufficiency, either to judge or act aright, we are engaged fervently to pray for an increase of faith; for we are sometimes ready to fear that it is not sufficiently strong to remove mountains, and we tremblingly adopt the language of the father, anxious for the recovery of his child, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

29*th*, 10*th M°*.—After our Saviour had been conversing with the young man who had great possessions, and pointing out to his disciples the danger of riches, Peter says to him, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee."* This appeal to our Lord drew from him no particular commendation, no praise, that could set them up with the idea that they had done great things, or performed any extraordinary actions. But the answer was simple and general. "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in

* Mark, x. 28.

the world to come life everlasting."* Does not this teach us a lesson of humility, and not to boast of what we have done, or what we have given up for Christ's sake? If we love God above all, we shall not find it very bitter to give up any thing that we are firmly persuaded he calls for at our hands. If with such persuasion we do find it bitter, it may lead us to conclude that *self* is not yet sufficiently subdued; and instead of being exalted in our minds by considering the great sacrifices we have made, we shall have more cause to be humbled under the fear that our hearts are not yet right before Him, who can penetrate their most inward recesses.

If we love any fellow-beings with ardour, we seldom think of any trouble we are at on their account. And if we were equally desirous of pleasing the Supreme Being, and our love to him were pure, we should want nothing but faith and confidence, that we were doing what would meet with his approbation, to enable us to press forward with that zeal and alacrity which would lead us to consider what more we could do, rather than look back with self-complacency on what we had already done.

* Mark and Luke, xviii. 29, 30. Matthew adds, that they were to sit on thrones, judging Israel.

27th, *12th M°*.—"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* Thus stands the text in our translation. But, since to prove effectual, implies more than to avail much; the sense it conveys to my mind, is, that the fervent prayer of a righteous man will be effectual, or, at least, avail much. This is, no doubt, held forth to us as an encouragement to persevere in prayer. But the query that naturally arises is, who are the righteous? Who shall dare to intercede with the Almighty, in the confidence that his own righteousness will make his prayer accepted? If we are zealous to have any of our requests granted, we shall rather pray that our own righteousness may not be the measure of acceptance. We can scarcely turn an introverted eye upon ourselves, without feeling a consciousness of our manifold transgressions. Weakness and infirmity seem ours, even when we are most desirous of walking with circumspection and integrity: and the humiliating language we see it needful to adopt, is, deal with me, O Lord, not according to my deserts, but according to thine own rich mercies. Yet, as we are engaged to seek wisdom and strength from Him who can alone impart it, we feel a

* James, v. 16.

renewal of our confidence, that he will assist our feeble efforts, and that even the endeavour to be righteous will make our prayers availing.

31*st*, 12*th M°*.—"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people."* This was the prayer of Solomon upon coming to the throne, when the Lord asked what he should give him. Few like Solomon have a great and mighty people to govern; but many have families, before whom they ought to be zealous to go out and come in with propriety, whom it is their duty to govern as a good king governs his subjects; and in the best manner they are able, endeavour to guide in the road that will tend to promote both their temporal and eternal welfare. In this anxious solicitude respecting them, do we not often feel our hearts engaged in fervent supplication, not only for their preservation, but that we may be enabled to assist and guide them properly. I believe we sometimes so sensibly feel our own insufficiency, that we are ready to cry out unto Him, who alone can effectually help us, What shall I do, O Lord? or how shall I preserve, through this thorny wilderness,

* II Chronicles, i. 10.

those whom thou hast committed to my care? Solomon's request was pleasing to the Lord, and abundantly granted: and I humbly trust that those also who are desirous of wisdom and knowledge to conduct themselves properly, will be favoured to receive it, and strengthened to pursue that course, which will upon the review be productive of peace to their own minds.

In the arduous task of training up others, I have often found it beneficial to look back to the period of childhood and youth, consider what were my own feelings and sentiments on various occasions; what benefited, and what retarded my progress in well-doing; what effect restraints or indulgences had upon my mind; or what influence the sentiments and conduct of others. We must look back to the period of temptation in ourselves, to judge of the feelings and desires of others in similar situations. Not perhaps so much when moral duties are the point in question, as in those less important matters, where they will find people more various in their opinions; and which, though our mature judgments may clearly decide respecting them, appeared not so clear to our view when under the prevalence of temptation; when our own wishes lent their aid to blind our judgment,

and reason was warped by our passions instead of maintaining its power over them.

By thus deeply considering ourselves, and studying the human heart, we shall be better able to lend a hand of help to others, to counsel or guide them through the various vicissitudes of life. Let us always be disposed to query, can I do any thing more? rather than sit down with the conclusion that we have done all that is necessary. It is not the slothful that will find the increase of wisdom and knowledge: to make our prayers effectual, they must be accompanied with exertions. I believe we shall never be able, before the last closing period arrives, (if we are then) to say "it is finished." So to work while the day lasts, that we may be ready at the approach of night, should be our constant care; that we may be able to look back with the hope that, through the holy aid of Him whom we have implored mercifully to assist us, we have done our best, and be able to say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."*

* John, xvii. 4.

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25th, 2d M°.—"SUFFER little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,"* was the language of our blessed Saviour when on earth. And wilt thou not, O most merciful God, permit all those who sincerely desire it, to come unto thee? To come unto thee, not only for a blessing, but for counsel and direction, and for help in the hour of need? Deplorable indeed, must our situation be, if we may not approach thee as a kind and merciful father. All our own exertions will avail us little, unless thy blessing attend them: if thou help us not, "vain is the help of man."† And under the firm persuasion that we have none in heaven but thee, nor in the whole earth in comparison of thee, we are engaged earnestly to pray for thy help and protection. That thou wouldest compassionate us, thy dependant children, and assist us through all the various struggles of life.

7th, 3d M°.—That young people begin where old ones leave off, is a remark very common with those who are advancing in life;

* Luke, xviii. 16. † Psalm lx. 11.

that is, children upon setting out in life, often adopt that style, and those indulgences to which their parents have only attained by much previous industry and economy. Though this plan cannot always be considered as prudential, and indeed, is more often otherwise, yet perhaps it is the most natural. As parents get forward in the world, their ease and indulgences are likely to be increased, and it seems reasonable that in some measure they should be so. Their children partake with them of those increased gratifications, and their ideas are formed accordingly. And as we always with reluctance give up those pleasures or conveniences to which we have been accustomed, it of course follows that our children will adopt them as far as they can, and probably farther than the maxims of prudence will allow. These considerations hold forth a strong motive to keep our expenses in moderation, and must have some weight with parents who are anxious for the happiness and prosperity of their children. For though the endeavour to hoard up wealth for them, will very often defeat the end which it aims at, of making them rich; and if it did not, would perhaps tend but little to promote their happiness; yet the keeping them in that moderate style

of life, which may prevent their having much to give up, when they settle for themselves, will, I think, as far as human foresight can go, be the most likely method to promote it.

The internal feelings of our minds, I believe, sometimes carry an evidence with them that we cannot doubt. But let us not reject other means of instruction as useless. Reason, judgment, hearing, eye-sight, and all our other faculties and perceptions of body and mind, are derived from the same eternal source; all useful in their proper places, and their testimony frequently corroborating each other.

27th, 6th M°.—To be fitted for the kingdom of heaven, is the most important business of life. What means are most conducive to that end, is a point not so easily decided. The Pharisee who approached boldly to the temple, enumerating his good works, no doubt thought that they would prove a sufficient passport, while the Publican, convicted in his own breast, could only intercede for mercy. The Apostle Paul, who, we may conclude, well understood the matter, mentions his care to keep himself in subjection, lest, after all his preaching to

others, he should himself be a cast-away. I believe it will be well for all who move in conspicuous spheres, who have the power and the disposition to do much good, sometimes to examine whether their own sanctification be going on at the same time with their bodily exertions, and put the query, what am I? as well as, what do I? Are my own evil tempers and dispositions overcome? Is every thing done from a pure motive, and in subjection to the Divine will? Am I nearer to the kingdom of heaven than when I first set out? When those who do much, either spiritually or temporally, and even from good motives, contemplate themselves with a degree of approbation and complacency, they will often be in danger of self-exaltation, which if not carefully guarded against, leads to spiritual pride. In this state they will be apt to look down upon others, forgetting from whence they receive all the gifts and graces they possess, and that though some have five talents given them to occupy with, others have only one. We should ever remember that meekness and humility are requisites, necessary for Christ's kingdom. And if we are ever fit for the heavenly soil, we shall certainly be transplanted there, whether we may be com-

pared to the humble plant of the valley, unnoticed except by the botanist; or the more towering shrub, adorned with rich flowers, that may attract general admiration.

4th, 7th M°.—Notwithstanding that it is right for those who have five talents to occupy with them without boasting, it is also equally necessary for those who have only the one, to obey the injunction of the master, and occupy with that one. Neither envious at the greater gifts of others, nor depressed with the smallness of their own, they should consider that the giver best knows what is suitable for them; and that if they make a proper improvement of that which is committed to their trust, they will most assuredly receive their reward.

8th, 7th M°.—Enable us, we beseech thee, O Lord, to receive every thing that draws us nearer to thee with thankfulness, whether it be of the humiliating or elevating kind. Thou knowest best what is profitable for us, whether to be raised and encouraged by hope, or depressed and kept low, under the various baptisms which have a tendency to purify the soul. Increase the longing desire we at times feel, to be made fit for thy king-

dom: and check the inordinate attention to, as well as affection for, the things of this perishable world. Thus considering it as our meat and drink to do thy will, O Lord, grant that we may, by progressive steps, advance nearer and nearer to thy heavenly kingdom; and accepting those means which thou hast appointed, be made fit for a habitation with thee for ever.

11*th*, 7*th* M°.—

" He has no hope who never had a fear;
" And he, that never doubted of his state,
" He may, perhaps—perhaps he may—too late."
COWPER.

However we may sometimes flatter ourselves with the safety of our situation, yet I believe there are seasons when fear seems almost ready to prevail, and doubts will arise in the mind respecting our admittance into that glorious state, which our souls have ardently craved. And Oh, that I may continue to have seasons of fear and doubt, if they will in any degree tend to my final preservation!

When on the verge of an awful futurity, every thing must wear a solemn aspect. We can form no idea of the place to which we

are hastening, and but faint ones of the attributes and perfections of our Creator. We cannot retrace our lives without acknowledging that we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and neglected to do those things which we ought to have done. We have been rebellious, as well as unprofitable servants. The multitude of our failings seems to rise up as a hand-writing against us, and we can almost fancy we hear the sentence pronounced, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."* That we are wanting, we must with all reverence and humility own. We can only pray that our repentance may be accepted, and our sins blotted out from the book of remembrance: for who can stand before a Being of infinite purity and holiness, and find any thing to plead in his sight? Yet there are seasons when hope revives, and we feel enabled to cast all our care upon Him who died for us. Upon Christ, who came into the world to redeem us from sin, and became our eternal salvation. Our hope and confidence are in him, as the appointed of the Father, to bring us to glory; who having so loved the world, as to give his only begotten son, that those who believe on him

* Dan. v. 27.

should not perish, but have everlasting life, we trust will shew mercy to our transgressions, and with him, give us all things.

23*d*, 10*th* M°.—There is scarcely any thing more humiliating, than to behold those whom we have been used to look to with respect and esteem, debilitated in their intellectual faculties. To see the relatives or friends, whose counsel we could ask, and on whose judgment we could rely, no longer capable of giving us their advice, or even of conducting themselves, gives rise to many melancholy reflections. With painful sensations, we contemplate the imbecility of human nature; and are taught a more complete lesson of humility, than it would be in the power of language to convey.

What poor, weak creatures we are, both in body and mind, is continually intimated to us by surrounding objects. And yet, how proud and self-sufficient is this poor, frail creature, man! Even in his best state, he is but like the flower of the field, which flourishes but a short time, before it is cut down and withereth. And, to pursue the metaphor further, if he is not cut down in his prime, how often does he fade, droop, and wither, before the scythe of death reaches him!

To lay down these mortal bodies, while the mind retains its vigour and self-possession, has always appeared to me desirable. But where Providence ordains it otherwise, we may have this consolation, that if, while we have faculties, we make use of them according to the will of the Creator, we shall be received into the mansions of eternal felicity, whenever we are released from this state of bondage, though our minds may have been so closely imprisoned, as to be shut up in impenetrable darkness.

30th, 10th M°.—

"But where's the passage to the skies?
"The road through death's dark valley lies."

Happy will it be for us, if, when passing through this dreary passage, we can adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

* Psalm xxiii. 4. Blair considers the rod here meant as emblematical of a shepherd's crook, or something of that sort; and, from the general tendency of the psalm, it seems most likely to be so: but in many places David mentions the benefit of afflictions, and acknowledges that chastisements have been profitable to him.

"Thou art with me." This is the ground for confidence, and the source of consolation. If our Creator, the Father of mercies, and Dispenser of all good, is with us, his rod as well as his staff will comfort us. We discern his hand in the chastisements that he inflicts, and are sometimes enabled even to rejoice in tribulation, under the persuasion that he afflicts but for our good; to wean us from earthly things, and draw us nearer to himself. In the desolate wilderness a table is prepared for us, and we can acknowledge such an extension of mercy as to say, "my cup runneth over." And if, in sincerity of heart, and confidence in the presence and protection of God, we are brought to the entrance of this awful, gloomy passage, that leads us to another world, it will not be important whether we are a longer or a shorter time in passing through it, being assured of preservation to the end.

But as we neither know the hour nor the day when we shall arrive at it, nor whether we shall approach it gradually, or come upon it suddenly and at unawares, it will surely be our best wisdom to endeavour always to keep in a prepared, watchful state, casting all care upon Him who careth for us,

and best knows what will be conducive to the benefit of his poor, weak creature, man.

14*th*, 11*th M°*.—I know and feel the weakness of human nature, and the necessity of Divine assistance, to enable us to do that good which we seriously wish. We can scarcely review ourselves, without lamenting that much remains to be done respecting the purification of our hearts and affections, to be fitted for that habitation where nothing that is impure can ever enter. But it seems to me, as if most of us must at last throw ourselves on the Divine mercy, and pray for the remission of our sins; though with a degree of confidence that we shall obtain it, if we have been desirous to wrestle for the blessing, through the aid of that power which can alone enable us to overcome. I believe it is often a satisfaction to surviving friends, to know that the deceased were sensible of their near approach to another world, and resigned to leave this: more particularly if their hope and confidence is strong, and they are comforted and animated with the prospect of a happy futurity. But the expression of such sentiments has nothing to do with their own state, however gratifying it may be to

their friends. And if nothing of the kind occur, it seems no real cause for regret with those who have endeavoured always to keep in a prepared, watchful state; often contemplating the slender thread of their existence, and knowing how soon it may be cut. If we are not prepared, I often think how little can be done on a sick-bed, when the anguish of the body not unfrequently overpowers all the faculties of the soul.

From youth to middle age, and advancing years; in the days of health and strength, I have been accustomed to meditate on my latter end; and, like the young man in the gospel, query, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"* The days of sickness have, I think, seldom overtaken me, at least of later times, without the consideration arising, whether it were a sickness unto death? If the apprehension were brought close, and a degree of resignation accompanied it, I have often felt doubtful whether it would stand the test of expressing any thing respecting it; and I should perhaps rather meditate in silence, than enter into conversation on the subject. If I leave these sentiments behind me, survivors who are interested may know, that now, at the age of

* Mark, x. 17. Luke xviii. 18.

nearly fifty-five, I feel the reviving hope, that the mercy which has hitherto accompanied me, will continue with me to the end—that I feel a firm persuasion of the goodness of God, and that a religious life and heavenly affections not only insure to us the happiness of another life, but greatly conduce to our happiness in this. I have felt religion (a word that comprehends a great deal) increase the joys of prosperity, when my heart has been lifted up in thankfulness to the giver of every blessing. I have found it alleviate the stings of adversity, and administer consolation in the hour of trouble. A never-failing resource to fly to, on all occasions; a covert from the heat, and a shelter from the storm; and "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."*

On the 7th of 12th M°. my mother suddenly departed this life, in the seventy-ninth year of her age. A few months back, when unwell, she expressed her thankfulness for the many blessings she had received; said she had no solicitude to live, but only that she might be fit to go, when the time came. For this change I think she patiently waited, and often looked forward: and we derive

* Isaiah, xxxii. 2.

satisfaction from the consideration that she had her wish gratified, in not suffering much pain, nor long confinement. Her affectionate solicitude for the welfare of her family, and desire to promote their happiness in every respect, will, I think, remain engraven on their hearts: her disposition to afford them or her friends any accommodation that was in her power, will long be remembered by many; and the poor within her compass will have reason to regret her loss.

For myself, I must expect almost daily to miss her, as a kind friend and parent, deeply interested in every thing that concerned me or mine; and I seem almost to wonder at my own composure on the occasion. But I feel consolation from the idea that she is removed from all sorrow, and that if we suffer, she will no longer partake of our suffering. And however strange it may seem, I feel some satisfaction from considering that, if I am removed from this state of existence, she survives not to lament my loss. As the enjoyments that this life affords are gradually receding from us, I believe afflictive dispensations lose much of their poignancy.

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3d, 1*st M°*.—Into thy hand, O Lord, we are at times enabled to commit all things, without feeling an over-anxious solicitude about the concerns of this world. Increase, we beseech thee, our trust and confidence in thee, who doest all things well, and canst do for us more abundantly than we could even ask or think. Grant that as we advance in years, we may also advance in fitness for that kingdom, towards which we are approaching; that not being entangled with the things pertaining to this life, we may use this world as not abusing it, and seek first thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof.

Thou who hast been the guide of our youth, whenever we have sought unto thee in humility, continue, we pray thee, to be our counsellor, through every succeeding period. Be thou our hope and our confidence, and our staff to lean upon in old age.

26th, 1*st M°*.—Whilst at meeting this morning, the strong language of the Apostle was brought to my remembrance, "I can do all things through Christ which strength-

eneth me."* I believe the more we are baptized into this living faith, the more we shall feel, that through Christ strengthening us, we shall be enabled to overcome all the enemies of our souls, and press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling. And as we submit to the operation of his power, who is able to subdue all things unto himself, we shall experience those warring passions which have raised a tumult in the soul, gradually to subside, and be made sensible that his word will be efficacious, whether he says to the tumultuous passions of the soul, or the tempestuous waves of the ocean, "Peace, be still."

27th, 6th M°.—When we hear a few sentiments expressed in our meetings, we are sometimes ready to say, 'this is but insignificant, it informs me of nothing but what I well know.' Perhaps little that is new can be told us; or little that is old be set in a new light: but if the call only remind us of what we already know, or awaken us to our own reflections, it may still be profitable, and tend to our edification. The mind of man seems prone to be gratified with great things. If to heal us of our leprosy, the prophet were

* Phil. iv. 13.

to come out with pomp and parade, and wave his hand over us, we should like it better than to receive a message with the command to go and wash in Jordan. But great and surprising events seldom happen. One little step after another is the usual progress. One day after another brings us to the close of life; various small particles form the mountain; and our increase in wisdom is generally gained by one small acquirement after another. It will be in vain for us to endeavour to counteract the general order of nature. To arrive at the great, the good, or the perfect, we must make use of all those intermediate steps, which will by gentle gradations at last lead us to the summit. And if the step be ever so low or short, when we find the ability, it will be wise to make use of it; for if it be but on, or towards the ascending ladder, it will bring us so much nearer to our journey's end.

When we take a view of the various scenes which nature presents to us in the material world, we may observe that the grand and sublime appear but seldom. The lofty mountain and the rushing cataract occupy but a small space, in comparison with the level plain, and the slowly rising hill; and however we may be struck with admiration in

contemplating such stupendous scenes, I believe we shall return with pleasure to the fertile valley, by the gently gliding stream, and most frequently make that the choice of our settled habitation. For here would be associated the ideas of peace and plenty, and all the calm and tranquil enjoyments of life.

23d, 2d M°.—Summer is approaching. How often of late have I said this to myself, when my spirits have been disposed to lowness. And has summer such powerful charms, that it will chase away the remembrance of a particularly gloomy winter? Certainly not; neither do I wish to have all trying scenes and afflictive dispensations obliterated. I believe we may often recollect them to our profit. But at the same time it seems reviving to behold some rays of light penetrating through the gloom, and we shall do well to accept even those little consolations that present themselves to our view.

11th, 3d M°.—If a man do not open his mouth in public, till fifty years of age, he is not likely to attain eminence in that line. The faculties may remain unimpaired, and the judgment clear; but the quick perception and energy of younger years will be wanting;

there will perhaps, too, be a defect of utterance and bodily strength, and the difficulties to be encountered will be more insurmountable. Some may suppose, that being called to the duty of preaching, the ability will of course be given. But the ability to perform what may be our duty is one thing, and the ability to rise to eminence (though under the same influence) is another. A man with a moderate understanding, or a defect in his pronunciation, may utter truths beneficial to his hearers; but if another with talents and abilities equally consecrated, is called forth into service, the effect will, in all human probability, be very different.

If we look round, we shall generally see a gradual progression in preaching as well as in other things. People do not start up at once into the exercise of a large gift, though some may advance much quicker than others. Many seem to stop short, when they have advanced but a little way, others proceed much further, and attain to some excellence.

If the talents committed to our care are properly occupied with, whether it be the one, or the two, or the five, we need not fear but that the due improvement of them will be accepted; for where only the little is given, but little will be required. In the

downhill of life, I believe we sometimes give ourselves credit for more improvements than we have in reality made. As the passions lose their strength, we fancy we have conquered them, and, of course, in the review of life, think ourselves better than we were a few years back; but this is not always the case; and if we wish to make a just estimate, we must consider what evil propensities are lessened by increasing bodily debility, and the advancement of age, and set them aside, always remembering that if we are under the influence of that which produces real improvement, it must operate throughout, and produce a reformation, not partial, but extending through our whole life and conversation.

1*st*, 5*th M°*.—How strong is the association of ideas! When will a May-day arrive, when I shall not think of our dear little L.? This day three years closed the period of her existence here: but her figure, her words, and actions are still present to my mind, and the sorrowful scene I then witnessed, remains fresh in my memory. May we recollect such scenes to our profit, is the desire of my soul. Many are the lessons we receive, not to set our affections too strongly on any thing in

this world. They pass away as a shadow, and tarry not: we also are gliding along with the same stream. We should endeavour to preserve equanimity, and look forward with hope to the end. Our melancholy musings should not lead us to be dissatisfied with life, but to set upon it only its proper value. Many sweets are mingled with its various bitters: and when we justly estimate the importance of the end proposed, even to prepare us for immortality and eternal happiness, we shall receive with thankfulness and resignation all the dispensations allotted to us, considering them as means leading to that desirable end.

5th, 6th M°.—This morning, went to meeting at Winchmore-hill. The last solemn occasion that led me there was fresh in my remembrance; but I think I may say, the recollection was accompanied with sensations of thankfulness, rather than regret. For however painful it might be to part with my dear mother, I think I should not have dared to breathe a wish to recal her to life if it had been in my power. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,"* for they "rest from their labours." They are cen-

* Revelations, xv. 13.

tered in that state towards which we are pressing after them, and removed from all those troubles and conflicts, which the sons of mortality may have yet to sustain. I often feel a melancholy pleasure in visiting the repositories of the dead. I have no idea of wishing to shun the place where many that I have loved are entombed in the silent grave. I like to cherish the remembrance of them, to unite myself to them in mind, and consider that the time is hastening on, when we shall meet to part no more. We who remain, stand in jeopardy every hour. Disease or accidents may suddenly overtake us, which we have neither foresight to prevent, nor ability to cure. In the providence of God we trust for protection; to His good providence we also trust to direct all things right. We often feel how little we can do, in preserving either ourselves or others from danger. We are sometimes in the way of infectious disease, without being aware of it: the accidental overturn of a coach, or even a fall in walking, may bring mischief suddenly upon us, and perhaps as severe as sudden and unexpected; yet, whatever evils may befal us, we shall derive some satisfaction from considering them not imputable to ourselves. If our own imprudence or negligence have

brought them on, we shall have to encounter the bitterness of regret, as well as the afflictive dispensation. To pray for preservation from evils of my own making, I often feel the engagement of my mind. Lamenting the state of human weakness and frailty that I feel, I have no resource to fly to but thy protection. O most merciful Father! be thou my strength and my support, and enable me, both spiritually and temporally, to pursue those things that make for peace.

26th, 6th M°.—"The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."* This consideration may have some tendency to tranquillise our minds, and calm our spirits, when agitated with the prospect of dangers and difficulties that seem likely to overtake us. The present view of public affairs is an awful one. The flames of war are again kindled, and so much threatening of an invasion from the French, that great preparations are making to repel the blow. How far this will operate on individuals, seems doubtful, and there is great room to fear, that it will be attended with particular difficulties. In all situations, we should endeavour to do the best we can; remember-

* Prov. xvi. 33.

ing, with humility, from whence all our help and strength must be derived, and relying on the good providence of God for protection. If "the lot is cast into the lap;" if every thing future seem doubtful, and we are anxious respecting the issue, yet the consideration that all events are in the hands of a merciful Creator, should revive our confidence, and encourage a degree of hope, that however gloomy the prospect may be, it will, under all-wise direction, ultimately terminate in good. I believe it is not advantageous to our minds to dwell much on scenes of horror, or frequently to read descriptions of them. They seem to harrow up the feelings of human nature without benefit, and often make so deep an impression on the mind, that they are not easily effaced. To prepare for such scenes would be almost impossible; to endeavour after it would embitter life; perhaps, comparatively, it is but a few to whose lot they fall, and when they have happened, however dreadful they may have been in contemplation, some alleviating circumstance unforeseen, may have accompanied them, or there has been an internal support, beyond what could have been expected.

21*st*, 7*th M°*.—Yesterday we had a violent storm of wind and rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning. I am not particularly fearful of a thunder storm; but I generally feel it productive of a degree of awfulness in my mind, and giving rise to serious reflections. Yet, if I considered it more dangerous than it most commonly is, and that I had my choice of some inevitable evils, I think I should not hesitate to say, with David, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man."* Let me have that punishment, or affliction, which seems to have most of his immediate appointment and influence. I have often experienced him to be a God of mercy and long-suffering; and though I know that all events are under his all-wise direction, yet faith is not always sufficiently strong to prevent some dismay at prospects that at times come before the view of our minds.

11*th*, 10*th M°*.—In the present state of public affairs, I do not always feel my mind as tranquil as I could wish. Notwithstanding an endeavour to put our trust in Him

* II Samuel, xxiv. 14.

who can over-rule all events, apprehensions of danger will sometimes agitate the mind; for our confidence in the Supreme Being, is not a confidence that we shall be guarded from the evils and afflictions of this life; observation and experience must convince us, that those most desirous of devoting themselves to his service, and coming up in the performance of all the duties of life, are yet liable to the afflictions attendant on humanity, whether from public calamity, or of a more private nature. A rational confidence arises from the belief, that He who governs the universe will cause every thing ultimately to terminate in good, though we may be very unable to comprehend the means he makes use of. This faith in his power and goodness is a source of consolation under every dispensation; and when afflictions are brought home to individuals in this humble state of dependance upon Him, I believe they will sometimes experience a renewal of their faith, and a vigour and strength of mind beyond what they could expect. A comprehensive view of the goodness of God towards all his creatures, does not equally affect our minds, with the contemplation of his goodness to us as individuals. Nothing is too great for him, nor is any thing too small.

We are separately, as well as collectively, the objects of his providential care; and we are assured by revelation, that the humble and contrite in spirit are the peculiar objects of his regard.

16*th*, 10*th M°*.—Wilt thou not spare the city, for the sake of the righteous that are in it? was the pleading of Abraham with the Lord formerly, on behalf of Sodom; and may not we be permitted to plead with the Lord for this hitherto prosperous island? Though we must acknowledge that in the strict sense of the word, "there is none righteous, no not one;" yet we trust, there are many who delight to walk in the law of the Lord, and to obey all his commandments. Wilt thou not spare, O Lord, for the sake of these, and preserve us from those who threaten us, and who would bring us into bondage? When we humble ourselves before thee, and repent of the sins which we have committed, have mercy upon us, we beseech thee, O Lord, as thou hast heretofore had mercy on the children of Israel, when they humbled themselves before thee, and sought thy protection! We trust we may intercede with thee for the blessings of peace, or indeed for other temporal blessings, so long as we feel such a submission to thy all-disposing Power,

as will enable us to say, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

And Oh, saith my soul, that the nation at large may truly humble itself before thee, and not vaunt itself in its own strength, but earnestly pray for thy protection; with awful seriousness of mind, putting up petitions to thee, and interceding with thee to bless those means, which the people believe themselves warranted to use, for self-preservation and defence! And as individuals, let us not say, our prayers will be of no avail, because the purposes and decrees of the Most High will not be altered for our intercessions; for how knowest thou, O man, what are the decrees of heaven? or whether humiliation, intercession, and prayer, may not be the means appointed by infinite wisdom, for averting those evils that seem ready to fall upon us? Many are the incitements recorded in Holy Writ, to stir us up to repentance, and to seek the Lord: many the instances in which repentance and humiliation have averted the calamities that were threatened. Therefore let us be encouraged when we feel his secret influence on our minds, to beseech the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased in his mercy to turn the battle from the gate, having faith that

our cry will reach the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and that he will answer according to his wisdom and good pleasure. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."* He can turn all hearts at his pleasure, as a man turneth the water-courses in his field; and they that devise mischief against others, he can turn it back upon themselves.

19*th*, 10*th M°*.—Ordered to be a fast-day. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?"† Many other good deeds are also enumerated. We are to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked, if we wish to perform an acceptable fast to the Lord. It is not for a man, "to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him." Kings and legislators may proclaim an outward fast; but their orders cannot reach the heart. It must rest with individuals to make the assemblies that are called, truly solemn assemblies; to put away all manner of wickedness from amongst us, and universally practise that righteousness, which it is said exalteth a nation.

* Prov. xvi. 7. † Isaiah, lviii. 6.

31*st*, 10*th* M°.—

" Not more than others I deserve,
" Yet, God hath given me more."

These lines, with the rest of the hymn, were impressed on my memory at an early period of life, and have at various times since been brought to my recollection. Why I enjoy so many blessings, is a query that sometimes arises in my mind, with a desire to be properly thankful for them, to Him who dispenses to every one as he sees meet; and not only to be thankful, but to do good according to the ability received, and discharge those duties allotted to my station. Those sentiments are never more prevalent than when I visit the infirm and aged poor in their solitary habitations. Scarcely able to do for themselves, and frequently without friends, or connexions to solace them in the decline of life, their situation appears almost melancholy; particularly when their poverty hardly allows them the necessaries of life; and a scanty pittance from the parish, with an occasional charitable donation, is all they have for their support.*

* Perhaps, a scanty pittance is all that the parish can with propriety allow. If the maintenance for the poor were collected only from the rich, the case would be different; but many are obliged to contribute, who can but ill spare

In this situation, much need is there for faith and patience to prevent sinking under their misfortunes; and perhaps a little kind attention sometimes cheers their drooping spirits, and affords them as much comfort as pecuniary assistance. If we have more than others, without particularly deserving it, which I think most people will acknowledge, it seems but our reasonable duty to contribute to their happiness; and is likewise the best mode of evincing our thankfulness to Him, who has declared that in as much as we have shewn kindness to the poor and needy, he accepts it as done to himself.

9th, 11*th M°*.—"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."* There are seasons when we feel all the energies of our souls suspended, when we seem incapable of any exertion, and as if we could do nothing but wait till our change come. In this state it feels delightful to pour out our souls before God, and rely on his goodness and mercy towards us. This seems our only source of consolation.

it; and it would seem hard to be obliged to assist in supporting others, in a way better than they can support themselves.

* Job, xiv. 14.

We have none but thee, O God, to apply to, for help and succour. When we are so sunk that we are ready to doubt whether we shall not be a burden to others, instead of being capable of affording them any help, then do we put up our cry to thee, the God of our salvation. When tried with outward circumstances that perplex us, or with fears that we shall fall in the day of trial; still thou canst send us help from thy sanctuary, and revive us with a little hope. Thou hast enabled us to get through many difficulties; and we feel a confidence that thou wilt yet be the support of those who trust in thee for help and preservation. Grant that the trials and difficulties we may have to encounter may have a beneficial effect on our minds, and, we beseech thee, suffer us not to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear; but with the temptation also make a way for us to escape.

12*th*, 11*th* *M*o.—Prayers must be repetitions. The same wants are continually recurring; and the same petitions, in substance, if not in words, must be put up for their relief. We must pray daily, for our daily bread. No doubt He who formed us and directed us to do so, sees it to be beneficial for us.

It strongly impresses on our minds our dependance on him, his omnipotence, and omnipresence. When we pray, we consider him as a God near at hand, and not afar off, whose ear is open to our cry, and who has power to relieve our wants. It keeps up the constant sense of his presence and his superintending providence over us; and through this means we have access to him, and feel a renewal of our faith and confidence.

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28*th*, 1*st* *M°*.—In all our distresses, in all our anxieties, enable us, we beseech thee, O Lord, to cast our care upon thee. Thou hast brought us into this state of existence without our choice or consent, by the word of thy almighty Power. We acknowledge with thankfulness that thou hast hitherto assisted us to pass through the vicissitudes of life, and that the more closely we have clung to thee, the Rock of ages, the more firm has been our support. Even though we walk in darkness and can see no light, still enable us to rely upon thee, our God; and grant us an unshaken hope that, as we are humbly dependant on thee, and follow thy leadings, we shall be brought through this probationary

state, to that blessed inheritance which thou hast ultimately prepared for us.

Dark indeed do we feel ourselves, when we endeavour to search into the mysterious government of God's providence over his creature man; we see and know but in part. Very minute is the circle of observation to which we are confined; yet in that small space, how little of what we observe can we comprehend. Often are we led to the conclusion, that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow,"* and that studying to find out things beyond the reach of our faculties, is weariness to both flesh and spirit. According to the wise man, the conclusion of the whole matter is, to "fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."† Our reasonings and inquiries should never lead us from the plain and simple duties of life. Without fulfilling them, we can never stand in our allotted station, and occupy that place appointed by Providence. When we contemplate the whole of the visible creation, we are lost in wonder and amazement: but our sphere of action is confined within very narrow limits, and that knowledge imparted which is necessary.

* Eccles. i. 18. † Eccles. xii. 13.

To keep in our proper ranks is the essential thing to promote the order and harmony of the whole. And notwithstanding all our doubts and perplexities, we should endeavour to keep our eye single, and our faith steadfast on Him who can make the crooked paths straight, and the rough ways smooth, and darkness light round about us.

1*st*, 4*th* *M°*.—When the disciples told Thomas they had seen their Lord, his mind was in such a state of doubt and perplexity, that he could not believe them. He thought that even the evidence of his own eyesight would not be sufficient, and that he must feel the print of the nails, and the hole in his side, before he could be convinced. But how different were his feelings when our Lord appeared and spoke to him! his faculties and perceptions were quickened; he no longer felt the need of all that evidence which he before thought necessary, but joyfully exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Some of those who have obeyed the call of Christ, and been desirous of becoming his disciples, have yet at times felt so clouded by doubt and perplexity, that all their past views and sensations have seemed ready to vanish away as a dream, and they have scarcely known

what to believe or think. Whether they look outwardly, or take an internal view of their own minds, still they are involved in obscurity, so that hope seems almost ready to fail. They cannot comprehend God's dealings with his creatures; nor discern, nor understand all the intermediate means which he makes use of to accomplish his ends. In this state of desertion and depression, when their faith seems at so low an ebb, that they can scarcely believe the good tidings that are told them, how readily can they sympathise with the doubting disciple! And if a gleam of divine light beam upon the soul, and they feel the presence of their heavenly Master, and a renewal of their faith in him, will they not be ready also joyfully to exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

It may be queried, what shall we do when in this low, depressed state; when He to whom we looked is withdrawn from us, we know not where, nor wherefore?—Wait in patience his return. Wait as servants who are daily expecting their lord; who are desirous to have every thing in order and ready for him, let him come at what hour he will. If he tarry long, let us not say, "my Lord delayeth his coming," and neglect fulfilling our various duties, but endeavouring to obey

his commands as far as we know them, trust that he will again more fully enlighten our understandings, and speak peace to our souls.

27th, 5th M°.—"Oh, send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me."* In times of doubt and anxiety, how often do we feel a deep solicitude that this may be our experience: that in all our trials we may act as Divine Wisdom would have us act, that we may feel the reviving hope that his light will lead us and guide us, and point out that line of conduct which we ought to pursue, through all the perplexities of life. Often have my spirits been calmed with this supporting faith. And as my mind has been turned to the Supreme Controller of all events, with a desire to feel submission to his will; a degree of hope has arisen, that notwithstanding the gloom that may attend some of our present prospects, those evils which we most fear may be remedied, or mitigated beyond what we could expect. Happy is it for those who in a state of trial can turn to the only true comforter. Here alone we can find a shelter from the storm, and rest for our weary spirits. And in the renewed faith that his light and his truth will lead us, and that we shall, as

* Psalm xliii. 3.

we are engaged earnestly to apply for it, be strengthened with his strength, we are encouraged to press forward in the arduous race, and thus surmount all the difficulties that surround us.

9*th*, 11*th* M°.—"What lack I yet?"* As we feel ourselves drawing towards the confines of another world, and approaching "that bourne from whence no traveller returns," the query is likely to be frequently revived in our minds. If we give way to serious reflections, we shall be impressed with the idea, how important it is for us to be ready when our long journey is at hand; and frequently ask the question, what more we can do, to make us fit for those regions to which we are hastening?

When we take a retrospective view of our lives, I believe few can say, with regard to their obedience to the divine laws, as did the young man in the gospel, "All these things have I kept from my youth up."† We cannot look back without the acknowledgment, that we have done those things which we ought not to do, and have left undone those things which we ought to have done. We have too often neglected the secret inti-

* Matt. xix. 20. † Ibid.

mations of duty; we have given way to a corrupt nature, and suffered temptations to prevail over our better judgment. All these things we know ought to be struggled against; and perhaps we have never more effectually conquered, than when we have, in meekness and humility, craved and relied on Divine help. Those who have been deeply solicitous to do their best, that they may stand approved to their heavenly Master, will be likely to be most zealous in the inquiry, what more they can do to be fitted for his kingdom. They have no wish to dwell with self-complacency on what they have already done, but are eager to press forward toward the mark, and not leave any thing undone that may help them to gain the prize.

14*th*, 12*th M°*.—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."* Happy is it for mankind, that their exertions are seldom called forth to comply with these precepts in their full extent. Comparatively, perhaps, there are but few individuals who have enemies to love; but few who are cursed, or hated, or persecuted, in any exten-

* Matt. v. 44.

sive sense of the words. Yet, when self-love predominates in the mind, every thing that interferes with it is beheld through a magnifying glass; we are ready to fancy we behold those evils which have scarcely, if any, existence. We think we see enemies, when it is only a phantom of the imagination. Though we may not go so far as to think ourselves hated and persecuted, yet we give way to the idea, that we are not treated with that love and respect which we have a right to claim; and thus foster in our bosoms those unhappy prejudices and heartburnings, which are not only inconsistent with Christianity, but needlessly embitter the cup of life. Now, if we consider the injunctions of our Saviour in their full force, and in a serious point of view, we must be convinced that if it be necessary to comply with them, in things so contrary to our corrupt nature, as loving our enemies, &c., it must be highly improper to give way to any bitter passions, on subjects of less provocation, or indulge those rancorous feelings, which generally take their rise from holding *self* in too much estimation. I am firmly persuaded that the more *self* is subdued, the more sweet and tranquil will be our passage through life. If we feel Divine love influence our minds,

it will naturally spread itself through all our actions: and, as our hearts become more and more purified from evil passions and propensities, we shall find an increase of those good dispositions, which tend to our happiness here as well as hereafter. But it is difficult to dig up the old root of corrupt nature; too often it can only be kept under; and, when we have bestowed much labour in endeavouring to eradicate it, we see a bud put forth in one place, and a shoot in another, which makes constant vigilance necessary to prevent its again flourishing. In this state of mind we must not give way to despondency; but, applying to Him, who can help our weaknesses and infirmities, trust, that in due time, he will subdue all things to himself, and purify our hearts from all evil affections.

29*th*, 12*th M°*.—"Be not weary in well-doing."* I am not weary with well-doing, but with ill-doing. Weary of doing those things which I wish I had not done, and of thinking those thoughts which I wish I had not thought. Weary of feeling those improper propensities and dispositions so often arising, which tend to destroy that meek and

* II Thess. iii. 13.

humble frame of mind, which it is our greatest happiness to possess. To reflect on our well-doing, is always a source of satisfaction. But when we feel various struggles in our endeavours to pursue the right path, and despondency is almost ready to prevail, we may be encouraged by the promised reward annexed to perseverance, and revived with the faith, that, notwithstanding our various trials, we shall assuredly in "due season reap if we faint not."* When we consider how often we have failed in duty, how often we have given way to temptation, and suffered wrong tempers and dispositions to arise, it sometimes leads to the inquiry, whether we should now be better able to resist and stand firm, if we were again tried with the same things. The sense of our own present weakness, in many instances, may lead us to doubt, and serve as a lesson of humility: but I believe it will be more profitable for us to bend our minds to the steady pursuit of right, in those things that at present occur and claim our attention, than to dwell too much on the past; remembering, that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."†

* Gal. vi. 9. † Matt. vi. 34.

1805.

20th, 1st M°.—All our desires, thoughts, and actions, should have a tendency towards heaven, the ultimate end of all our wishes and all our hopes. To have our thoughts thus turned will not diminish, but increase our happiness; for our nature is so constituted, that without looking towards futurity, we can have no rational enjoyment. It will be no bar to the innocent gratifications of life. In many instances, our duties and our pleasures are connected, as in promoting the welfare and happiness of our families, and in the exercise of the benevolent affections. Whenever our minds get so engrossed by the pleasures or the business of the world, as to lose this tendency towards heaven, they may be compared to a bow that has lost its proper spring, or, perhaps, even become bent the wrong way; and when this is the case, it will require no small force and exertion to bring them back again. After getting too deeply buried in the world, an afflictive dispensation sometimes suddenly brings the mind back to its proper centre, and is that force which proves effectual in turning it, when milder applica-

tions would be tedious in their process, if not wholly inefficacious.

20th, 2d M°.—I can look back to the time, when, though I will not say that I thought God and Mammon might both be served, yet I flattered myself that what are termed the pleasures and vanities of the world, might be reconciled with a good degree of religion. Thus, I believe, many continue to think; and their endeavours to unite things so opposite in their nature and tendency, produce a continual struggle. But in the progress of the contest, one or the other generally loses ground; and I doubt, it too frequently happens, that the side which would produce the most durable satisfaction, gives way. He who has been trained to religion and virtue, and used to serious reflection, finds at first some hesitation in adopting any thing that may lead from it. He perhaps queries, can I do this without losing the approbation of my Maker? Is it consistent with a religious life? He does not inquire whether a religious life be proper and necessary; but how far he may go, without transgressing its laws. Thus doubting and hesitating, he falls in with one little temptation after another, endeavouring to keep up the practice of reli-

gious duties at the same time. But, as one deviation from the dictates of pure truth is generally succeeded by many more, the feelings which at first operated are overcome; and thus way is made for the total neglect of those duties which were once thought essential.

I believe many, if they entered seriously into an examination of themselves, would acknowledge this to be the case: and observation on the conduct of various individuals will lead to the same conclusion; convincing us of the danger of endeavouring to mix those things which cannot be mixed, and that the first step we take contrary to conviction, is in danger of leading us into a vortex of folly.

16*th*, 5*th M°*.—There is one point to which all controversy seems to lead; that is, the weakness and fallibility of the human mind. For whilst we see men of integrity, who appear to have equal clearness of understanding and soundness of judgment, differing so much in opinion on various subjects, it must be presumption, indeed, if we consider ourselves as having arrived at such a certainty, that we cannot be mistaken, seeing that we also are but men.

Of late years, much controversy has arisen

among us as a religious society, respecting articles of faith. That it can be of any benefit, appears to me quite improbable. I consider it as a privilege, that, in our little community, there are no articles of faith to which we, as individuals, are obliged to subscribe; no creeds drawn up by human invention, which we are called upon to confess that we believe, however incapable we may be of understanding or comprehending them. I think, in general, we have concluded the tree to be good, which has brought forth good fruit: and while a decent, orderly conduct has been maintained, without any flagrant breach of our obvious, known, particular principles, inquiries have seldom, if ever, been made respecting our private sentiments, or in what manner we understand particular parts of Scripture; though, to promulgate doctrines inconsistent with the generally adopted principles of our Society, would at all times be reprehensible.

That we may "stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,"* is my sincere desire; not making it a cloak for any unrighteousness, but remembering that if it is in *that* liberty we stand free, it must lead to adding one virtue upon ano-

* Gal. v. 1.

ther, till the whole catalogue is complete; and amongst which not the least is charity.

3d, 8th M°.—Here we are, O Lord, poor, weak, and ignorant. We turn our eyes round the world, and behold the various orders of beings, and the immensity of thy creation, and are struck with wonder and amazement at the infinitude of thy power. We contemplate man in his different situations, from the savage to the most polished nations. In some places born to toil, oppression, and misery; and in all verifying, in a greater or lesser degree, the assertion that "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." But the inquisitive mind rests not here. It confesses, with awfulness, the infinitude of thy power, and reverently adores that Majesty which created the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein. But the why; the wherefore? next obtrude. Questions as far beyond the power of human faculties to solve, as the extent of the earth is beyond the powers of the visual ray to compass.

We must then return into ourselves to become acquainted with thee; to feel that thou art good as well as great. Here, by thy gracious influence over our minds, thou art evincing to us, that though we are poor,

weak, and ignorant, thou art willing to enrich, to strengthen, and enlighten us, so far as the situation in which thou hast placed us requires. And with the knowledge thou art pleased to impart, and to give us capacities to attain, we desire to rest satisfied: not endeavouring presumptuously to penetrate into that obscurity which thou hast caused to surround us; but with an eye of faith, waiting patiently till thou shalt ordain light to arise out of darkness, and in humble, submissive dependance on thee, endeavouring to fulfil all thy commands.

12th, 10th M°.—

"For all I bless thee; most for the severe."

This line of Young's was quoted on the last solemn occasion on which we were at Winchmore-hill; since which period it has often occurred to my mind, accompanied with the query, why bless God most for the severe? We bless him for all, because we have faith to believe, that his mercy and goodness preside over all; that he afflicts not willingly the children of men, but is leading them through discipline to a state of permanent felicity. We acknowledge him as the Author of all good; and when we feel ourselves surrounded with the enjoyments of life, our hearts are na-

turally warmed with gratitude to Him from whom they flow, and we bless and thank him for his abundant mercy.

If we "bless God most for the severe," it is not likely to be whilst we are under the immediate pressure of the afflictive stroke; but at a future time, when we become sensible of the beneficial influence it has had on our minds. This past experience leads to a more patient submission under the Divine hand, and resignation to his trying dispensations. To be patient and submissive under all the evils of life, and thankful for all the good we enjoy, is no small attainment.

26th, 11*th M°*.—I think I have clearly seen the impropriety of marriages between persons of different persuasions, and their tendency to produce dissatisfaction. In so close a connexion, the more the united couple are of one mind, the fairer prospect there is of conjugal happiness. Religion often sits light upon the youthful mind; but as years increase, seriousness sometimes increases with them; and if there are children, they excite in parents a joint interest in their welfare, and an affectionate solicitude to promote it, as far as is in their power. They feel the necessity of their united efforts, and a co-ope-

ration in all their plans; and if a difference of opinion prevail even in small matters, it is apt to produce dissatisfaction: how much must this be increased, if the difference relate to those things deemed essential. In the most prosperous situations in life, many trials and anxieties will occur; and in the conjugal connexion, they will be greatly increased or mitigated, according as the parties are united in friendship, confidence and love.

With regard to children, it appears to me that there is only one line of conduct to pursue; that is, to do them all the good we can: collectively, as far as their joint interest is concerned, and individually, as far as it can be promoted, without infringing on the rights or claims of others. From infancy, through all the intermediate steps to mature years, this should be our simple and steady object, and even last as long as we have the ability to render ourselves useful to them. Yet we must not expect that they will always think or act as we would wish them, or as we think prudence requires of them. *Our* experience has been often bought; perhaps *theirs* must be so too. Liberty is a precious enjoyment; and if we had the power of influencing the conduct of our children on all points, I believe it would not be desirable,

unless their judgments were convinced. We must expect that at years of maturity, they will decide and act for themselves; and if they let our advice and counsel have its due weight, it is all parents have a right to expect or claim. Our influence over them may be greater in some things than it is in others; and without feeling any displeasure where our judgment is not coincided with, we must keep the main object steadily in view, and influence them for good, when and where we can. If this conduct were pursued, I think it would tend to preserve affection, keep up harmony in families, and be productive of mutual happiness in the end.

1806.

15*th*, 1*st M°*.—Under thy sacred influence, O Lord, I trust I can say, "My heart is fixed;"* fixed in its purposes and desires to be what thou wouldst have me to be, and to do what thou wouldst have me do. Strengthen my resolutions, O Lord, to be conformable to thy will; and enable me so to overcome my corrupt nature, that I may not only walk with uprightness in outward act, but be re-

* Psalm lvii. 7.

deemed from every evil suggestion and perverse thought.

11*th*, 2*d M*°.—"A man's enemies are the men of his own house."* This is often the case spiritually. Some people feel a promptitude to do good. Meek, humble, and benevolent, they are ready to promote the happiness of all within their reach. Others are more powerfully under the corruption of their nature; greater selfishness prevails; they feel strong emotions to pride; they are quick, instead of slow to anger; apt to return evil for evil, with many other wrong propensities. Many of these see the necessity of a change; they know where help is to be obtained; they apply for it; make war against these secret enemies, and find they can be conquered, at least in degree. By continued vigilance, one foe is vanquished after another, and they are encouraged to hope that all will be subdued. But we must not be elevated with victory. Though we have done well so far, there is no room for boasting. To be obliged to struggle implies defect: if it require an effort to do right, it is a proof that some weakness or imperfection remains. Even if we had

* Micah, vii. 6.

got the better of all our evil inclinations, and entirely overcome the old man with his deeds, still we should only have attained to the character first described, and have more cause for humility than exaltation.

13*th*, 7*th M°*.—"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."* I do not know any thing that comes nearer to the feelings of affectionate parents, than the welfare and prosperity of their children. Even with regard to the things of this life, how many anxious wishes do we feel that their lot may be comfortable! Still more is our anxiety respecting their happiness in futurity. And when we estimate things according to their proper value, we shall feel a willingness to give up for them, as well as for ourselves, those temporal gratifications which would retard us in the progress of duty, or be any hinderance to us in our spiritual concerns. Often do we fear, and often do we rejoice, according to the reports we hear respecting our children, and as our own observations on their conduct lead us to form opinions concerning them. Sometimes fearing that they will be drawn by one little

* John, i. 4.

deviation after another, from the path of safety and peace; at others gratified with hearing their commendation. If we can say we have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in the truth, we shall endeavour whilst our lot is cast amongst them, to watch over them for good. Sometimes dropping a caution or a hint in season as opportunity may offer; and under the influence of that love, which can bear and forbear, not only endeavouring to persuade them to the practice of those things which are most excellent, but likewise putting up our prayers to the throne of Grace for their preservation. I believe few can know the anxiety of parents for their children, till they are in the same situation themselves. Then all the tender sensibilities are called forth; and as they look forward with increasing solicitude, and sometimes cast a retrospective view on themselves, even those who have been attentive to their own parents will be apt to wish they had been still more so, and more disposed to consider their feelings; whilst those who have not acted properly by their parents, will feel an unavailing regret. And, alas! how often do we feel an unavailing regret for many of the past actions of our lives; unavailing at least, so far as respects the present life.

Often have I wished to impress upon young people the difficulty of setting wrong to rights, or retracing those steps which have led us into the wrong path. Though the first few steps may appear shallow, and even their termination doubtful, yet steeper ones will soon succeed, and we shall be almost imperceptibly pushed forward without seeing where we can make a stand. Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther, can be only the language of Omnipotence; and though poor, frail man may sometimes adopt it in seasons of confidence, yet he may as often have to lament the frailty of his resolves.

One thing, and one action unexpectedly involves another, and if we once step aside from the line of propriety, we always find it very difficult to return, and frequently cannot remedy the evils arising from the deviation, in the future course of our lives. While we are thus humbled under a sense of the weakness of human nature, may we be induced fervently to pray to Him who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee,"* and leaving "those things that are behind," endeavour through His help to press forward toward the mark, that we may gain the prize.

* II Cor. xii. 9.

20th, 7th M°.—Every degree of familiarity with vice has a tendency to blunt the moral feelings. Hence arise the various opinions of mankind respecting the turpitude of many of our actions. Those who have been brought up in an innocent line of life, and had any religious principles instilled into their minds, would feel shocked at many actions which pass with little censure in the fashionable world. But fashion cannot alter the genuine precepts of Christianity, neither can it make wrong right; and morals must be at a very low ebb indeed, when authors who pretend to write to reform mankind, treat lightly of great vices, or think it proper to lower the standard of moral rectitude in compliance with fashion, instead of holding it up to view in its proper elevation.

21st. From the above considerations how necessary does it appear for youth to have a guarded education, that moral and religious principles may be firmly rooted in the mind, before they are called forth to much exertion. In the natural course of things many circumstances will occur that excite the evil propensities of our nature, without our putting them in the way of temptation with the injunction not to be tempted.

19*th*, 10*th* *M*°.—I will humble myself before the Lord. I will abase myself before the most high God. When my transgressions are set in order before me, and I behold the handwriting that signs my condemnation, I will prostrate myself before the throne of Mercy, and plead guilty before God. Yet not without the consoling hope that my repentance will avail, and that through the mediation of a Saviour, my pardon will be pronounced. There are times when we feel all self-confidence laid in the dust: when we see that we have nothing of our own to depend upon, nothing to plead in our own behalf, and that our only covering is confusion and shame; when we reflect how often we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and how far we are from having attained that purity which the Gospel requires, we are ready to cry out with the Apostle, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Through the efficacy of his power operating on the mind, I trust the old corrupt nature will be more and more subdued, and that we shall not only hear the sentence pronounced, thy iniquities are pardoned and thy sins are blotted out; but as we patiently

* Rom. vii. 24, 25.

submit to its continued operation, we shall experience a new nature formed in us, and advance to that purity of heart and affections, in which it is said we shall "see God." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

5th, 11*th M°*.—An inordinate self-love is the bane of all happiness. Its natural consequence is self-indulgence, and an endeavour so exclusively to pursue our own happiness, that it generally defeats the end at which it aims. The more care we take of ourselves, the less will others be disposed to take of us. For though in a moderate degree it is quite right and proper for us to take care of ourselves, yet it should be the care of one of a number, not an exclusive care of the sole individual self. Where the love of self too strongly predominates, it narrows the mind. It leaves no room for the benevolent affections, and that reciprocation of kindness and good offices, which constitute the principal happiness of a social being. We are so formed by the Author of our existence, that to communicate happiness is in degree to receive it; and we can never so alter the constitution of nature, as to enjoy happiness our-

* Matt. v. 8.

selves, whilst that of those about us is wholly disregarded.

The selfish principle where it receives no check, is apt to increase with increasing years; and though people who are under its influence may have remaining friends who are disposed to treat them with kindness, and render them assistance, yet it will be the attention arising from propriety, and mixed with pity, rather than love and respect, and generally will fall far short of what self-love will think it has a right to claim. It will surely then be wise to check this principle of exclusive self-love in its first beginnings, before it gain the ascendancy over us; to guard against jealousy of every sort, and not to give way to the fancy that we are slighted, or unkindly treated, from only surmises, or a failure of little trivial attentions. This disposition generally arises from pride and selfishness, and if indulged, only embitters life. I believe we may rest in the confidence, that if we endeavour to promote the happiness of others, our own will be promoted in return. If we cultivate this disposition, it will become more and more habitual; even sickness will not banish it altogether from our thoughts, but we shall endeavour to make the attendance we require as little

irksome as possible. It will lead to patience instead of fretfulness and discontent; and we shall in return receive those attentions which will alleviate the evils we sustain.

6th.—Some people seem disposed to accuse their parents of having spoiled them by improper indulgence, and shelter themselves under that idea. But though we may be inclined to plead some excuse for a humoursome child, under such circumstances, the validity of the claim is seldom allowed beyond childhood. When people have their eyes once opened, to see what they are, and what they ought to be, the remote causes will not be of much consequence, or have any great effect in extenuating their faults. When we see them, we can have no excuse for continuing them, let them arise from early indulgence, or any other cause. If we perceive that we have been indulged in bad habits by our parents, we must exert ourselves vigorously to combat them; not add self-indulgence to parental, and so increase the evil. We must bring ourselves under a strict discipline; and if we have not been used to battle, we must now enter the lists, and seriously aim at being conquerors. And though we may feel much reluctance to the hardships of war, and desi-

rous of remaining at ease, yet we shall find in the end, that it will only be submitting to slavery: for our passions will gain more and more the dominion over us, and we shall neither look back with satisfaction, nor forward with a well-grounded hope.

26th, 12*th M°*.—Whenever I attempt to contemplate the power of the Almighty, a self-existent Being, without beginning and without end, my mind seems too weak to support the effort, and I feel myself whirled in the vortex of confusion. That such a Being exists, myself and every thing around me evidently prove; but when I turn my eyes, to take a view of his immensity, and the heights and depths that surround him, my head grows giddy with the prospect, and I am obliged to look at something nearer, to bring my senses out of their confusion. The mind of man seems formed to *receive* the truths of revelation, and those which arise from the works of nature; but they are beyond his abilities to *fathom;* and he must rather "wonder and adore," than expect to comprehend.

31*st*, 12*th M°*.—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one

to another."* To fulfil this precept of our Saviour, we must love one another with many imperfections: for where shall we find a perfect man? The brightest characters are not without some shades; perhaps they appear more conspicuous from the brightness of the other parts. If we are loved, it must be with many failings and imperfections; and we have no right to expect others should possess superior excellence. Formed of the same materials, and cast in the same mould, we are subjected by nature to the same infirmities and temptations. Do we feel ourselves weak, and can we expect others should be strong? Rather let the humiliating sense of our own deficiencies lead us to excuse theirs. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."† It unites us in the sacred bonds of Christian fellowship. It leads to justice and mercy. It even outstrips justice; for it inspires with a zeal for the welfare of each other, beyond what equity might demand. It makes us willing chearfully to sacrifice our own gratifications to the happiness and well-being of others. "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins."‡ It inclines us to compassionate the failings of others, instead of judging them

* John, xiii. 35.

† Rom. xiii. 10. ‡ I Peter, iv. 8.

with rigour; knowing how much we stand in need of the same compassion. Love leads to sympathy, one of the sweet consolations of humanity. It is the never-failing source of happiness both here and hereafter.

1807.

13*th*, 1*st M°*.—Acts of charity and kindness should never be intermixed with the wormwood and the gall. If we relieve the indigent, or assist the necessitous, it should not be accompanied with reproach, or impressing a sense of the obligation. If we give what we have to give grudgingly, or perform an act of kindness with reluctance, it loses great part of its value, and becomes oppressive, rather than gratifying, to the receiver. To contribute to, and promote the happiness and well-being of others, should be our end and aim in every act of liberality: and the generous mind will not be disposed to claim any merit for doing that which is, perhaps, to stamp it no higher, only one of the duties of social life. Neither will it be looking for returns in submissions and acknowledgments, though the grateful heart will be ready to express itself.

18*th*, 5*th* *M°*.—Stand in your allotments. I think Lavater says, in his writings, that he used to take some sentence in the morning, to serve him as a watchword through the day. The above seems like a kind of watchword frequently occurring to my mind. It takes in a large compass, and implies a great deal. We must, in the first place, consider where and what our allotment is, and then all the duties attendant on our situation. Without this we can never stand as we ought to do in our allotment. The situation of some takes in a wide sphere of action; that of others is more contracted. Some have apparently hard tasks to perform, while others glide on more smoothly. If we stand in our allotments, we must perform the duties attendant on that allotment, be they small or great, conspicuous, or of a more private nature. I believe those who desire to stand firm, will find habitual watchfulness necessary. Many little trials occur, that may put our patience to the test, and make us flinch, if we are negligent or off our guard. If we consider what we ought to do, and keep prepared for the performance of all the little duties of life, as well as for those of greater importance, and inure ourselves to the practice of them by a steady perseverance, we may then be said to

keep the watchword, and stand in our allotments.

19*th*, 7*th* M°.—The present awful state of public affairs often throws a gloom over my mind, which spreads to future prospects, and makes me look forward with fear. Yet we, who are in all probability drawing near the verge of time, one would think, need not look forward with many fears on our own account, though they may be excited for our posterity. In that case we shall fear for those who seem not to have much apprehension for themselves; who are not only more interested and occupied with present pursuits, but who can likewise contemplate the future with more hope, and see brighter prospects ahead. A query has often arisen in my mind, why those who cannot expect to have long to feel the vicissitudes of time, should be so much more disposed to be cast down with the approach of troubles and inconveniences, than those who may consider it probable that they have many years to come. I mean to set religious considerations out of the question; knowing, that, in the well-disposed mind, they will operate the same in young and old; and that faith and resignation, with the belief of an over-ruling Providence,

will have the same happy effect on the minds of both.

I think it must arise, in general, from increased debility, and the want of that spirit and energy which support us in younger life, and enable us better to struggle through difficulties. In this state, the approach of evil is more formidable; and we feel as if we should sink under difficulties, instead of overcoming them.

Every thing that makes exertion necessary seems burdensome in the decline of life, and we sometimes contemplate the idea of it with fear and trembling. To glide gently down the stream, seems then all we wish for, respecting ourselves. But as in past exigences, which have called forth some exertion, we have frequently got through better than we expected, so whatever scenes we may have to encounter in future, I trust we shall have strength sufficient for the day, and not only be enabled to combat, but likewise to overcome: not such an overcoming as to expect that worldly things will be altered for us, but the overcoming that reduces self under subjection to the Divine will, and through the influence of that power on the mind, brings peace and serenity, and enables us to rejoice even in sorrow.

14*th*, 11*th M°*.—Thou alone, O Lord, canst pour the spirit of supplication on the longing soul. Enable us, we pray thee, to draw near unto thee, through Jesus Christ, the appointed means: and notwithstanding the mystery that surrounds us, grant that our faith may be strengthened to lay hold on Thee, the Rock of Ages. And under an awful sense that thou art always present, enable us to worship thee in humble prostration of spirit.

22*d*, 12*th M°*.—There are afflictions of so depressing a nature, that they almost confuse our senses, and take away the power of judging; when the future seems so enveloped in obscurity, that we know not what to expect, or where to look for alleviation. Yet if we take a view of the world, observe the trials sustained in it, and how wonderfully people get above those things, which one might suppose would overwhelm them, it gives us room to conclude, that our nature is so constituted, that it returns to some degree of level, and where it cannot overcome the evils of life, is by degrees enabled to bear up under them. In our deepest probations, even when we lie down in sorrow and awake with trembling, I believe we are never so de-

serted by hope, but that some fragments of it still cling to the soul, and notwithstanding their fragility, afford a little comfort. In all our trials, religion is our surest source of consolation: but in some cases it increases their poignancy, and more embitters those evils which arise from misconduct in ourselves, or others who are near to us. Yet even here, it by degrees becomes its own antidote, and brings the soul into that state of resignation to the Divine will, which enables it to bear all things patiently; trusting that He who is infinite in power, is also infinite in mercy, and will look down with compassion on his poor creature man. That he who gave himself for our sins that "he might deliver us from this present evil world,"* will be our advocate with the Father; and having, through the operation of his power, subdued all things unto himself, will finally be our sanctification and redemption, and that in the end "God may be all in all."

27th, 12th M°.—"We lie down in shame, and our confusion covereth us."† How many are there in the world who can adopt this language! and may we not call it an evil

* Gal. i. 4. † Jerem. iii. 25.

world, when wickedness is so prevalent in it? Though, upon the first creation, the Lord pronounced that all was good, yet how soon did man corrupt his ways, and fall from that state wherein he was created! It might be pronounced an evil world long before the flood; for I think the Scriptures declare, "That every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually."* It was evil again after the flood; evil in the days of the patriarchs; and according to both sacred and profane history, evil down to this present day. It was to deliver us from this evil world, that our Saviour came. To open for us a door of entrance into a better world, and to lead us into it, if we are but willing to follow him in faith. When we feel the pressure of natural and moral evil, and are burdened with the weight, shall we not gladly lay hold on the offered relief, and cleave to Him, who is our only refuge? Our Saviour calls this present, an evil world; well may we do so too. He came to redeem us from a world that lieth in wickedness. But his prayer for his disciples was not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they might be kept from the evil. Being not conformed to this world, we must keep

* Gen. vi. 5.

our station in it, according to the will of our great Master; struggling to overcome evil, and not sinking into despondency. Notwithstanding the admixture of evil, we enjoy, through the goodness of God, many present blessings for which we ought to be thankful. Let us encourage ourselves in faith and hope, that through the secret workings of His power, who rules and over-rules, all things will be brought into order; that evil will be overcome of good, and that all creation will finally praise his name.

1808.

24th, 1st M°.—ENABLE me, I beseech thee, O Lord, to cast all my care upon thee, and commit all things to thy disposal, consigning them as into the hands of a faithful Creator, who is ever caring for the workmanship of his hands. I have no plea to claim an exemption from those bitter cups, which are so often dispensed to the children of mortality. But grant me grace, O Lord, to receive them with that meek submission, which is becoming thy dependant creature, and that true Christian resignation of mind, which can say, "not my will, but thine be done." But as we learn from thy declara-

tions in Scripture, that thou willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should return, repent, and live, we are emboldened to intercede for those who have swerved from thy law, that thou wouldest be pleased to touch their hearts, that they may be deeply sensible of their transgressions, and arriving at a state of true penitence, become objects of thy mercy and forgiveness.

Under a sense, O gracious God, of the many blessings I have received, I desire to approach thee with thankfulness; and reviewing the various incidents of my life, commemorate thy goodness in both temporal and spiritual preservations. In the greatest extremity thou canst help us, when all other help seems ready to fail. And though our faith should be tried even to an hair's breadth, yet we beseech thee, suffer it not to be wholly extinguished, but grant that thy sustaining arm may be underneath to support us, and that the remembrance of thy past mercies may revive us with a little hope, and strengthen our trust in thee, who art the author of our salvation.

14th, 2d M°.—"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."* This text cautions us

* Matt. vi. 34.

not to be over-anxious for the morrow, not to be too careful about those things which may happen to us in future. When we feel our minds disposed to contemplate all the miseries which are incident to human life, to dwell with a painful anxiety on the various trying situations to which we may be exposed; on the horrors of war and famine; on sickness and poverty; may we not a little vary the text, and say to ourselves, sufficient for thyself is the evil thou sustainest? Though it may be profitable for us to consider what we are, as men and creatures, the station we are placed in, and the inconveniences we are liable to, that we may not be astonished and overwhelmed with things which may come upon us; yet, to be continually brooding over them, will only unfit us for present duties, and perhaps not have any salutary influence in preparing us for those evils which may fall to our lot. Our reliance must be on Him, who promised his disciples, that when they were brought before kings and rulers for his sake, it should be given them in that same hour what to speak. If we are his disciples, we may also trust that he will afford us succour in the hour of need, and either make a way for us to escape, or strengthen us to bear the trials that may

come upon us. We should never be disposed to magnify our own sufferings; let us rather consider the many blessings we receive, and how little we deserve. This should not lead us to fear, but to confidence in the mercy of God: to thank him and take courage. Though we see others more deeply tried and afflicted, yet we know not what consolations they may likewise receive; and we shall find it more profitable to endeavour to support our own trials, than consider how we could support other people's. We should sympathise with their distress, and endeavour to alleviate it as much as lies in our power; but not harass our minds with the fear of similar evils. Those things we dread will very likely never happen to us; and, even if they should, our imagination may have pictured them much more insupportable than we shall find them in reality. We know our own failings and imperfections, and that much yet remains to be purified. We know also that this applies to us collectively, as well as individually.

He who formed the world, best knows how to govern it, and adapt the means to the accomplishment of the end designed. What trials are necessary to complete our purification, he only knows; and whether they are of a public or of a private nature, we should

endeavour to be patient under them, and look forward with hope, rather than give way to despair.

7th, 8th M°.—Exhortations to seek the Lord are frequent in Scripture. The same language has been adopted by many instructors; though in some instances it has been not a little abused. The same language is still held forth; and the exhortation seems not less needful now, than it was in former days. Let us query what are the ideas connected with the phrase? Under the Jewish dispensation, the Israelites were exhorted to seek the Lord with their whole heart, to keep all his commandments, and walk in his laws; and so long as they studied his statutes and walked in them, prosperity was to be their portion. David says, "Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."* "Your hearts shall live that seek God."† Amos says, "Seek ye Me," (the Lord) "and ye shall live."‡ Others of the prophets likewise give similar exhortations. The Apostle to the Hebrews says, "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Re-

* Psalm ix. 10. † Psalm lxix. 32.
‡ Amos, v. 4.

warder of them that diligently seek him."* Thus, faith is the first thing. Believing in God, and that all wisdom and power belong to him, we are led to look up to him with reverence. We desire to be informed what is his will concerning us, and we not only endeavour to seek it by that outward revelation which he has been pleased to afford us, but feel our hearts disposed to receive any intimations of his will. To seek the Lord, does not imply any bustle of the mind, any more than of the body. Our own efforts cannot command the influence of Divine grace; and to seek the Lord, seems to me not so much to require activity in the intellectual part, as to encourage that disposition of mind which is ready to receive "with meekness the ingrafted word." But let us not so far deceive ourselves as to imagine that we can be seeking the Lord, without a correspondence in outward actions. All the statutes and ordinances formerly were to be strictly kept, without any idolatrous mixture. We must endeavour, as far as we are able, to walk in "all the law of the Lord blameless." Thus uniting a right disposition with the proper regulation of our outward conduct,

* Heb. xi. 6.

we shall seek the Lord to our comfort, and find him a rich "Rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

1*st*, 9*th* M°.—Hypocrisy is a detestable vice; but I have been doubtful whether the endeavour to shun it is not sometimes made a plea for those liberties and indulgences which our own consciences cannot approve. To be a hypocrite is to endeavour to deceive; to endeavour to make people think better of us than we deserve, or really are. To avoid this, we may fall into the opposite extreme. We may say, for instance, I will not attend week-day meetings, lest it should carry an appearance of religion beyond what the rest of my conduct will bear. A first-day meeting I may attend as a thing of course, without any remarks being made upon it. My own mind tells me, I may be equally benefitted by attending those on week-days; but here comes reasoning on the other side of the question, and pleads, that if I do this, more will be expected from me in other things than will be found; and thus I shall hurt religion, and incur the imputation of hypocrisy, if not the guilt. I am convinced of the benefits of temperance, but I am afraid

* Heb. xi. 6.

to stand firm against intemperance, from the same motives. In this way, minds seriously disposed may be led to make many breaches in morality, and wound the peace of their own conscience, from the fear of appearing over-religious, or being charged with hypocrisy. We should never consider ourselves as hypocrites for coming up in the practice of any known duties, however deficient we are obliged to acknowledge ourselves in some others; and if we could but look forward, and see the benefits we gain, or the losses we sustain, from an adherence *to*, or deviation *from* rectitude of conduct, it would lead to circumspection, and so stimulate us in the pursuit of right, that every thing obstructing the cause of religion and virtue, would by degrees be removed, and those means adopted that would tend to its promotion. We must remember, the work is generally accomplished by a gradual process; by little and little, step after step, we arrive at the proposed summit. The descent which leads to danger is often likewise gradual. One little error is committed, one little means of help is omitted, and thus we sink by degrees, till we scarcely know how to rise again. Yet, O my soul! if thou art sunk thus low, thou art not quite beyond hope. Help is laid upon One

who is able to bear. Pray for his mercy and assistance; for His redeeming power who died for us. He will not turn a deaf ear to the supplication of the sincere in heart; but by the renewings of his grace, will again raise thee from thy fallen state, and enable thee to sing the song of thanks for thy deliverance.

25th, 10th M°.—"Every good gift and every perfect gift"* cometh from thee, O Lord! Grant us faith, we beseech thee, to apply for those gifts, which thou art willing to confer upon those who ask aright; and in the nothingness of self, enable us, through the ability afforded, to offer unto thee hearts devoted to thy service.

25th and 26th.—I can never regret feeling my heart overspread with love, however unworthy may be the individual object of it. Love leads to charity; to pity the weakness and frailties of others, and even to give up self to do them good and promote their welfare. A sense of duty may do all this; but duty is but a cold motive in the comparison. Love is the most delightful sensation of the human soul; and though, in this present evil

* James, i. 17.

world, it is often productive of painful feelings, yet it humanizes the roughness of nature, leads us to bear and forbear, and makes our sacrifices a pleasure. But love must not infringe upon justice; if we let it do this, it will lead us astray. When love and duty go hand in hand, we are in the safest situation. We need not weigh and consider how far duty obliges us to go in serving another, what we ought to do, and where we may stop. Prompted by love, we have no need to draw the discriminating line; but find our own happiness in being able to indulge the overflowings of a benevolent mind. And, alas! what plea can we have to be extreme to mark that which is done amiss? Prone to evil, we can but lament the corruption of our nature; and if we have not fallen so low as some others, be thankful for our preservation, and consider that we perhaps have been favoured to escape many of those temptations which have been a snare to others. May I ever be preserved from thinking myself a great I! *I* have never committed this fault, or the other fault. Oh may this language be far from me, and may I adopt that of, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!" When I look into my own heart, and see all its deformity, I find cause for nothing but

deep humiliation. At the best, it seems but a continual struggle between nature and grace; no room for boasting, but rather the fervent prayer of faith, that I may be endued with strength to overcome.

7th, 12th M°.—Increase my faith, O Lord. This is the frequent aspiration of my mind, and the breathing of my soul, when poured forth in supplication before thee. Suffer not the horrors of war, the dreadful scenes we hear of, or the miseries which surround us, ever to raise a doubt respecting the superintendance of thy providence; or lead us to say, where is the Lord? Suffer not thy frail creature man to scrutinize thy conduct, or pry into the mysterious government of thy providence, but rather, in the littleness of self, adore thy majesty and power. And in this childlike dependance and meek submission to thy will, often have we cause to thank thee that our courage is revived, and that even in weakness we are made strong; and as thy influence is over mind as well as body, grant, we beseech thee, if not inconsistent with thy will, some touches of thy love; that quickened by thy Spirit, we may be feelingly convinced that thou art good, and that for our consolation and happiness,

" Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" and ever. Amen.

29*th*, 12*th* *M°*.—Much has been written of late about evangelical preachers and evangelical preaching. The ideas affixed to the term I should suppose rather vague and uncertain. If evangelical preaching have any precise meaning, I should think it must be applied to the promulgating that doctrine delivered by Christ during his ministry on earth, and recorded by the Evangelists. Now, as " the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord,"* those truths and those instructions which were delivered by Christ himself, should have the greatest weight; and if any thing in the subsequent writings of the Apostles may seem to our shallow capacities not exactly to coincide, we had better leave them, as things " hard to be understood," than suffer them to infringe upon those precepts which were delivered by the lip of truth: precepts which not only contained those divine and moral truths necessary for the regulation of our outward conduct in all holiness and righteousness, but likewise enforced that inward purity of heart, which breathes love to God,

* Matt. x. 24.

and good will to man. Our Saviour says, "he that hath my commands and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."* Obedience is the fruit of love; without which we should be like the barren fig-tree, which cumbered the ground. He likewise says, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock."† We should be careful not to depreciate that which Christ has exalted. And those preachers who set aside the necessity of good works and moral obligations, (which some are accused of doing,) must give up all claim to the title of evangelical, since such doctrine counteracts the whole tenour of the Gospel: and even the Apostle Paul, in whose writings there are some things hard to be understood, says, respecting the elect, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."‡ Therefore none can have any ground for supposing themselves of the elect, without bringing forth the fruits of righteousness;

* John, xiv. 21. † Matt. vii. 24, 25.
‡ Rom. viii. 29.

for " he that committeth sin is of the devil."* Our Saviour says, " he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."† But this must be an active belief; for he likewise says, " not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."‡ It is said, the devils believe and tremble; but this is not effectually to believe; for he that believeth in God, will endeavour to keep his commandments: thus, true, saving belief produces the fruit of good works. But not considering the harmony and coincidence of the Divine administration, we sometimes depreciate one part of the scheme, that we may exalt another. Thus, when we feel the proneness of our nature to evil, and the need we stand in of a Saviour and Redeemer, and see that Christ is pointed out to us in the Scriptures, as the appointed of the Father, to be the propitiation for our sins, we gladly accept the free offering of his grace and mercy, and rejoicing that we have found the means of salvation, are unwilling to indulge any thought that may disparage the love of Christ to sinners, or lessen the greatness of his mercy to fallen man. Here warmth of feeling may lead some to imagine themselves of the elect, without considering

* John, iii. 8. † John, vi. 47. ‡ Matt. vii. 21.

that the offers of his grace and mercy are the means for our purification; and that if Christ becomes our salvation, it must be by the operation of his power, sanctifying our hearts, and redeeming us from all evil. Thus shall we go on from one degree of holiness to another, till we arrive at the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

1809.

2d M°.—Toward the end of last month there were very extraordinary floods, occasioned by a rapid thaw succeeding some heavy falls of snow. The fields around us exhibited little other appearance than a surface of water, and it flowed over the road at Ballspond for a considerable way. Several bridges were washed down in different parts of the country.

6th, 2d M°.—I believe it is not profitable always to look at things on the most gloomy side. It has a tendency to weaken our faith in the providence of God, and his goodness to his creature, man; and sometimes brings us to that state in which we are ready to conclude that it is a blessing to be removed from this state of existence, and settle re-

specting others, as well as ourselves, that they are removed from evils to come. Yet all beyond the grave is dark and mysterious. Our only trust is in the mercy and goodness of God. But believing in the revelation he has vouchsafed to mankind, we feel a degree of confidence that if we have endeavoured to be conformable to his will, he will finally make us happy. And cannot we feel the same trust and confidence in Him, with regard to the few fleeting years we may have to pass in this vale of mortality? Will not He, who is the final Arbiter of our future state, conduct us through the present, most to our advantage? Most assuredly he will. But we see that "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."* That "all things come alike to all;"† that we have no power to avert the miseries of life, nor can any efforts of our own secure to us temporal gratifications. I mean not to undervalue human prudence and foresight; I believe it is so ordered by Providence, that in many things they should have their effect, though always with the liability to fail, and perhaps in public calamities they will the least avail. If we are continually viewing things on the

* Matt. v. 45. † Eccl. ix. 2.

dark side, and anticipating evil, we not only suffer in apprehension as well as in reality, but by indulging such a gloomy disposition, we are incapable of relishing those little diversities of joy, which at times fall to the lot of most men. In those seasons when we feel our spirits revived, and when our hearts are open to receive the blessings that are bestowed, and enjoy the innocent gratifications of life, let them ascend in grateful thanks to the Author of all good: "In the day of prosperity be joyful;"* do not endeavour to check it by turning to take a view of the miseries of life, but indulge it with moderation. We know that in the common course of things a reverse must come; that this life is only a state of trial and probation, and that we should be temperate in all things; but the best preparation for its evils is an humble resignation to the Disposer of all events, a trust that he will be our never-failing support, and that all things will work together for good.

24th, 2d M°.—In the parable of our Saviour respecting the distribution of the talents, the servant who had received the five, gained other five; and the servant who had received

* Eccl. vii. 14.

the two, gained other two. Both of these received the sentence of "Well done," from their lord. And if he who had received the one talent had made the same proportionate improvement, and gained another one, there is no room to doubt but that he likewise would have received the same approbation and the same reward. There seems therefore no cause for discouragement to any diffident minds, if upon a review of themselves they conclude that they have done and can do but little; since if they do what their hands find to do, with the desire of pleasing their Master, there is no doubt of their services being accepted by him. The broad river, that furnishes water to towns and cities, and has commerce floating on its surface, attracts the eye of beholders, and is obviously useful. Smaller rivers may in degree confer the same benefits. The little brook when compared with these, may appear very insignificant; yet still it has its use, and by gliding gently on in the course designed it, its benefit is felt in many solitary cottages, and it furnishes refreshment to the cattle that are grazing by its banks. Thus we may compare the man who has the five talents, and who makes the proper improvement of them, to the broad river: he stands conspicuous, and his useful-

ness is felt and admired. But the man with the one talent, who may be compared to the little brook, need not estimate himself as of no use, and though he may shrink from a comparison of his own labours and abilities with those of the other, yet, if he pursue his right course and occupy with his one talent, he will no doubt be esteemed as a faithful servant. Between the broad river and the little brook, there are a great variety of streams of different dimensions: so between the five talents and the one, there may be many gradations. To keep in our own sphere is a lesson necessary for us to learn. Not to aspire after those things which are beyond us, or fancy we must do great things because another does them. Every man is not called to the same station, or the same employments; and if we do the best we can, in the situation in which we are placed, I believe it is all that will be required at our hands. To make war with our own evil tempers and inclinations, to subdue self, and keep it in subjection, is sometimes laborious work, and will be taken into the account by Him who has pronounced a blessing on the pure in heart, and, like the two mites cast by the poor woman into the treasury, be esteemed of more value than the large sums cast in by those who were rich.

20th, 3d M°.—Justice requires of every man that he should keep his expenses within the limits of his income. Prudence requires something more; that he should, if possible, make some little savings, to provide for sickness or other contingencies. Those who form their establishment to the extent of their income, (let the situation or class in life be what it may,) and mean to be just, subject themselves to a state of frequent irritation. Little disappointments sometimes occur, or expenses that they had not calculated upon; and their minds are in a state of perturbation how to keep up their accustomed mode of life, and yet provide for contingencies. To retrench is always so difficult, that it seems much wiser to arrange one's plans upon too small a scale, than upon one too large. Though economy is always proper, a rigid attention to it in trifling particulars is frequently irksome and harassing to the spirits. Notwithstanding all human prudence and foresight, there are many vicissitudes in life which cannot be guarded against. The rich become poor, and the poor become rich, without any merit or demerit of their own. In the former case, an entire change of plan becomes necessary, and we need not be ashamed of it, when it does not arise from

our own fault. In such a case we must model our plan according to existing circumstances; and perhaps shall feel less on the whole than while we are struggling with endeavours to keep up appearances, and studying where we can save. Where we *cannot* save, we easily settle; but where we *can* save, is often very difficult to find out.

16*th*,4*th M°*.—What is religion? is a query that sometimes occurs to my mind. One of Johnson's definitions of it is, "Virtue, as founded upon reverence of God, and expectations of future rewards and punishments." I think I should rather define it to be a sense of the impression of Deity upon the soul of man. As the mind becomes enlarged, and the understanding opens, it looks up to God as its Creator; and, in contemplating his wisdom, power and goodness, is led to reverence and to adore the Author of its existence. Thus religion takes possession of the soul, and subsists between God and it; and, as we feel that all good comes from him, that our happiness must depend on him, and on having our will conformed to his will, we are led to the practice of all virtue; which I should rather say, flows from religion as its source, than that it is religion itself.

If religion be the impression of Deity upon the soul, whence arise such differences amongst mankind? The differences amongst mankind in various respects, seem a problem hard to solve. How they originated in beings of the same species, we can form no conjecture, unless they arose from the workings of man's imagination. No doubt, a difference at present subsists with regard to religion, as well as other things, from habits, manners, and education, in the different parts of the world. But I think we scarcely hear or read of any nation, without some impressions of religion; however they may be obscured or disregarded, God has not left himself wholly without a witness, even in the darkest regions of the earth.

20*th*.—Farther considerations on the foregoing, lead me to doubt whether the distinction be not more in words than reality, between virtue considered as a feeling of the mind, "founded upon reverence of God," and the sense of Deity on the soul. But with the idea of virtue, we generally associate something external, that may bring it into action; whereas, religion having God for its author and end, is not dependant on outward circumstances, neither is the exercise of it

infringed by the most solitary situation imaginable. The soul may ascend to God in holy meditations and devout aspirations, without any external communication.

28*th*, 8*th M°*.—To bestow much attention upon the children of the poor, in having them decently trained and properly educated, seems the fashion of the present day. How desirable is it that steady, actuating principles should be the foundation of plans so useful to the community; and not beneficial only to the present rising generation, but in all probability to succeeding generations also! Fashion is a fluctuating thing; it has no solidity. And though I firmly believe there are many who seriously consider the subject of benefitting the poor, and the importance of giving them that portion of learning and knowledge, which may prove advantageous to them through life; yet I believe there are many others who follow where fashion leads, without bestowing much thought either upon the cause or the effect of their conduct.

While it is the prevailing fashion for mothers to nurse their little ones, and pay attention to their children in general, we see it practised with apparent pleasure and ala-

crity. But let the tide turn, and I doubt whether it would not be complained of as an insupportable fatigue. Nature would plead in vain, and the calls of duty be unheard or disregarded. We are often in danger of endeavouring to make one virtue serve as a substitute for others. We meet with but few characters so listless, that they are satisfied with themselves without doing any thing that may seem commendable; and, therefore, adopting the virtue most prevalent, they settle in self-complacency.

If we endeavour to do good to the poor, upon the broad, solid basis of right principle, because it is our duty, according to our ability, to benefit mankind, we must consider the middle classes likewise as having some claim upon us, and shall not wantonly exercise their patience, by giving them unnecessary trouble, or by withholding from tradespeople the payment of their just dues, which often causes them inconvenience and vexation of spirit. How many families are there who adopt plans of life, which preclude their servants from attendance on places of worship; thus preventing them from being in the way of receiving instruction, and making what is called the Sabbath a day of bustle and fatigue, instead of a day of rest! Yet

many of these, perhaps, give a portion of their substance to support charities, or even a portion of their time to attend to the instruction of poor children, though so little anxious for that of the adults who are more immediately under their care. Surely, where this is the case, there must be a want of those steady, fixed principles, which lead to consistency of conduct; a want of that true Christian spirit, which breathes not only the comprehensive exhortation, "Do good unto all men," but likewise, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."*

29th, 10th M°.—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"† Most assuredly he will. This is the all-sustaining confidence that supports us through the vicissitudes of life. Whether we are involved in public calamities, or feel ourselves under the pressure of individual suffering, we lay hold on this faith as a door of hope; and whether we are bemoaning ourselves under present evils, or looking forward with the fear of those that are to come, the confidence that the Judge of all the earth will do right, is a sure source of consolation; bears up our

* Matt. vii. 12. † Gen. xviii. 25.

drooping spirits, when they are ready to sink into despondency, and revives us with the hope that we shall be enabled to get through all difficulties, while the various dispensations of Providence, so incomprehensible to our shallow capacities, are all working together for good.

This firm reliance on the wisdom, mercy and goodness of God, enables us to receive every thing with thankfulness, as coming from him, and according to his will. But I cannot go quite so far as Law on this subject, or conclude, that every man born into the world comes at the time, and under the circumstances most beneficial for him; for since, in the present state of things, there must be a variety of situations, how each situation can be the best possible for that individual who fills it, whether born of good parents or bad parents, or with a variation in many external things, which may be considered as tending to spiritual as well as temporal benefit, seems rather beyond my comprehension; though, consistently with the goodness of God, we must suppose all to be in that state wherein they have sufficient means afforded of attaining to salvation.

Now, though every thing should be received with thanksgiving, as coming from

God, yet it does not seem to me consistent with the feelings of human nature, to receive all things alike. When what we consider blessings, are bestowed upon us, our hearts rise spontaneously in gratitude to the Giver; and I believe such feelings elevate the soul, and are beneficial to it. When what appears the reverse is handed to us, perhaps to receive it with patient acquiescence with the Divine will, is all that we can accomplish; though faith in him as the good physician, who administers only those bitter potions that are needful to cure us of our maladies, may excite us to thankfulness for his watchful care over us, particularly when we have faith to believe that it will tend to our purification: but here the thankfulness arises from hope. The thorn in the flesh, however salutary, is not pleasing; and we shall be apt, like Paul, to pray for its removal, though with submission to the Divine will. We cannot be said to be thankful for that which we pray to have removed, though we may be strengthened to bear it patiently, by the reply, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I cannot be thankful that my eye-sight is very indifferent, and my hearing defective. If I were to attempt to thank God in words, my mind would revolt from it, as not pro-

ceeding from the heart, and I should only act the hypocrite before Him, who would see through the disguise. Yet, I trust, I endeavour not only to be resigned to these trials, but patiently to acquiesce in them as the will of God, being firmly persuaded that all his dispensations are in mercy, and will work together for good to those who love and fear him. Law says, "As therefore when we think of God himself, we are to have no sentiments but of praise and thanksgiving, so when we look at those things which are under the direction of God, and governed by his providence, we are to receive them with the same tempers of praise and gratitude."—"If a man cannot thank and praise God, as well in calamities and sufferings, as in prosperity and happiness, he is as far from the piety of a Christian, as he that only loves them that love him, is from the charity of a Christian." I doubt I am in both cases too far from those desirable attainments. Though we cannot, consistently with the truth of our feelings, thank God for trials and sufferings under which we immediately groan, nor bless him "most for the severe," yet we may feel our hearts raised in gratitude and thankfulness to him, for those rays of light and hope which sometimes

beam upon the soul in the darkest hour of affliction, and enable us even in sorrow to rejoice.

15*th*, 11*th M°*.—As thou hast declared, O Lord, that "he that honoureth not the son, honoureth not the father,"* and that thou and thy beloved son are one, we entreat thee to accept our desires to worship thee as we ought: and as our finite capacities cannot comprehend the mystery, if we form wrong conceptions concerning it, we beseech thee, O Lord, pity and pardon our mistakes. And be graciously pleased, we beseech thee, to accept our endeavours to honour thy beloved Son, by obeying his commands, and conforming ourselves to his precepts, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit imparted by him, that so we may be partakers of that peace which he gives to his followers, and worship before the footstool of thy throne for ever.

8*th*, 12*th M°*.—Watch over one another for good. This sentiment has much impressed my mind; and though I cannot find it as a Scripture text, I think it accords with

* John, v. 23.

the doctrines of Christianity, and may frequently be useful for our meditation. Those who are watching over their neighbours and associates with the view of spying out their defects, are so far from the genuine spirit of Christianity, that even the precepts of Him, who came in love to redeem and to save those who are lost, would perhaps have but little effect. But there is another class who think they do well to watch over one another, that they may keep things in order, and promote the welfare of society. These I wish to be particularly impressed with the latter part of the sentence, "for good." This should be the sole end and aim of all our watchings over each other; and whenever we act, it should be for the good of the individual or the community. If these should ever clash, it throws a difficulty in the way not easily got over. The appointment of overseers in our society may be a very useful one in the hands of those capable of executing the office with propriety; but it is an office of no small importance. A man may be a religious man, and mean well, without the qualifications requisite for such a station. Religion is the foundation on which the superstructure must be raised; but there requires a sound understanding and a discri-

minating judgment, to enable us to discern, in many cases, how we ought to act.

10*th*.—To do evil that good may come, is reprobated by the Apostle. The evil is certain; the good must be very precarious. With regard to tale-bearing and detraction, I have often thought it difficult to draw the line between what is such, and what is not. There is certainly a marked distinction of character amongst men; and the good of society sometimes requires that it should be held up to view. I am not for that false tenderness and palliative mode of proceeding, that would cover the turpitude of bad actions, or make every one alike; but before we publish the failings of others, let us weigh our motives, and see that they are good. We are often surrounded by those whose minds we wish to enlighten, and give them a just view of men and things. This cannot be done without sometimes pointing out the right and the wrong actions of different people, and, I think, does not come under the imputation of detraction; for every man must stand or fall, according to his own actions. But if by confidential whispers we traduce the character of another needlessly, or report any thing not well-founded, we

are certainly culpable; likewise, if we encourage secret information from others. If we always consider the motive and end, and watch over others in love for their good, it will be the best means of preserving us from erring on the right hand or on the left.

We should not lead young people astray, by a false fear and timidity in speaking the truth; at the same time, we should point out the impropriety of actions, and hold up to censure, the failings rather than the men; considering that in a greater or less degree we all err, and fall short of what we ought to be, and stand in need of the kindness and forbearance of others in return.

1810.

6th, 1st M°.—Locke says, "children may tell when they are hungry or thirsty, and should have the wants of nature supplied, but should not be permitted to choose for themselves, and say, I would have wine or white bread." That "the wants of fancy, children should never be gratified in, nor suffered to mention;" and that "even asking for them should be a sufficient reason for a refusal." I think this position is wrong in two respects. In the first place, the prohi-

bition of asking would deprive children of many little innocent indulgences, which could hardly be anticipated by even a kindly attentive parent. And in the next place, it would deprive them of the benefit of learning to bear refusals, which generally make a part of the discipline of life. Besides, if a child knows that it is not to have a thing because it asks for it, the natural consequence is, that it will learn habits of circumlocution, and endeavour by some indirect means to accomplish its end; and this will, most probably, have a more pernicious effect on the mind, than the indulgence of many little fancies. I should wish as much as possible to encourage children to tell me, with openness and simplicity, all their little wants and wishes; and by gratifying those which were not improper, I should conciliate their affections, and at the same time enforce the necessity of their submitting to my judgment, and patiently bearing a refusal where I saw it necessary or proper.

I believe Locke is right, when he says, "Every one can more easily bear a denial from himself than from any body else;" and certainly, children should by degrees learn to consider and judge whether what they ask for is proper or not; but I should fear that this,

inculcated too early, would produce reserve, and in a timid mind, give rise to slavish fear. Though habits of self-command and self-denial are essentially necessary in our progress through life, yet that sort of independent spirit that cannot bear to be refused any thing, has some tendency to foster a pride which cannot bear to be obliged. In our endeavours to avoid one rock, we not unfrequently split upon another; and it is no easy task so to steer our course as to avoid all the different shoals that surround us. In training up children, it will not do merely to adopt the best written plans of education. Without entering into the spirit of the writer, and forming a judgment for ourselves, we shall be in danger of often misunderstanding the tendency of his rules, and misapplying them. Besides, practical experience will often rectify theory, and bring to light, objections that could scarcely be foreseen. Different tempers and dispositions will require different treatment; and though some general rules may be profitably adopted, yet, after having studied the best treatises on education, much must depend on the proper application of them, and a consideration of their suitableness to existing circumstances and situations.

29th, 1*st M°.*—When we take a retrospective view of ourselves, turn over the leaves of our past lives, and observe, in deeply-engraved characters, the many sins we have committed from our youth up, and the many deviations from that path of rectitude which we ought to have followed, we may well be dismayed, and fear and trembling may take hold upon us.

In this depressed, humiliating state, what a door of hope and consolation is opened to us, by considering ourselves as still objects of that invitation graciously vouchsafed to man, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."* The offer of forgiveness is still made to us; the fountain is yet open in which we may be cleansed from our impurities, if we will but submit to the operation necessary for our refinement. Had we only to look forward to being weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, we should have cause to be cast down; most assuredly knowing that we shall be found wanting. But we have an Intercessor who is touched with our infirmities, and who will compassionate the weakness of our nature, when we dare not plead any thing in excuse for ourselves. For sinning and repenting, in

* Acts, iii. 19.

a greater or a lesser degree, seems to be our progress through life. Sometimes we may be said to become the subjects of sin willingly, by giving way to those tempers and temptations, which we know will eventually lead to it. At others, we are perhaps off our watch, and are taken by surprise; for many are the difficulties we have to encounter in this frail state of existence. But though we can only look back with deep regret and humiliation at our past failings, yet we must acknowledge that we have sometimes struggled against sin, and have been strengthened to overcome. This should encourage our faith and hope. However short we may be of the "mark for the prize of our high calling," we should be engaged still to press after it, humbly praying for that assistance which will enable us to get the better of our corrupt nature, and fit us for those mansions, where we shall find rest to our weary souls.

8th, 3d M°.—A strict adherence to truth is not only an essential duty in a religious point of view, but is indispensably necessary to preserve the morals of any community. If we allow ourselves little deviations, and consider them as trifling, our minds will by degrees

grow callous to things of more importance; and we shall be in danger of finding some salvo for the grossest violations of that principle of truth, which ought ever to be held sacred.

17*th*, 6*th* *M°*.—"They that fear God, and work righteousness, will be accepted of him." The revival of this sentence at meeting this morning, gave rise to the following meditations. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* It creates the desire to know and to do that which will be pleasing in his sight. And as our minds become open to receive instruction, and desires are raised that we may benefit by it, it leads to a serious application to the Source of all power, that we may receive strength to "work righteousness." For we can never contemplate ourselves, without feeling how weak and frail we are, and acknowledging that in us dwelleth no good thing. Even when we would do good, evil is present with us; and all our wrestling seems ineffectual, unless strengthened by superior aid. How gladly, then, shall we hear the intimation, "Ask and ye shall receive."† Humbled in mind, we shall gratefully accept the offered terms of salvation; remission of our sins through

* Psalm cxi. 10. † John, xvi. 24.

Christ, and the assistance of his power to enable us to overcome. Thus shall we press forward towards the mark, and be accepted of God through Him.

29*th*, 7*th M°*.—"To rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep,"* are some of the best feelings of human nature. They are sympathies, which endear man to man; and, in minds properly regulated, not only lead to promoting happiness in others, but likewise to the increase of our own.

19*th*, 8*th M°*.—O Lord God, sensible of the awfulness at all times of approaching thee in prayer, more especially, vocally in the congregation of the people who are assembled to worship thee, taking upon us, as it were, to be a mouth for them, we beseech thee, suffer not any to warm themselves by a fire of their own kindling, but let them wait till their lips are touched with a live coal from thy holy altar. And if, under the influence of thy life-giving presence, they feel it incumbent on them to speak forth thy praise, strengthen them, we beseech thee, so to present their offering, that it may be accepted of

* Rom. xii. 15.

thee. And we farther entreat thee, O Lord, that thou wouldest be pleased so to guide and preserve those who are called publicly to approach thee in prayer, or to speak in thy name, that they may not do it in words only, but that, through thy sacred influence, their conduct and conversation may also glorify thee, and shew forth thy praise.

22*d*, 8*th M°*.—When thou sittest in judgment, O Lord, who shall be able to stand before thee? We may plead that we are weak and frail, but we cannot plead that we have wanted power to do better than we have done. We can only throw ourselves upon thy mercy, and pray that we may be forgiven through the intercession of Jesus Christ. We stand before thee as culprits before their judge; not to vindicate ourselves, but to pray that thou wouldest be merciful in passing sentence upon us, and that through the mediation of Him, who came to seek and to save that which is lost, thou wouldest be graciously pleased to pardon our iniquities and transgressions. And grant, O Lord, if it be consistent with thy will, that as this earthly tenement sinks into decay, our spiritual life may be invigorated, and

prepared for those mansions where we shall be blessed with thee for ever.

An account of the latter end of the righteous is often encouraging and satisfactory, and tends to animate us with the hope that our endeavours to live the life of the righteous will not be in vain. But I am not partial to dreams and visions. In serious matters it appears to me not profitable to excite the flights of imagination, or give up the mind to fanciful representations and allusions. Their tendency is to sink the ideas rather than exalt them, and ludicrously familiarize those things which ought to be contemplated with reverence. The lively hope, and strong assurances felt by some near the close of life, (and which in a few instances seem almost to triumph over the feelings of nature,) are not necessary appendages to an entrance into a state of blessedness. For though it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy,"* that he saveth us, yet it is added, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" by the cleansing us from our sins, and influencing us by his power, that we may fulfil all righteousness. Our obedience at

* Titus, iii. 5.

best is but very imperfect, and we shall have need to pray for mercy and forgiveness. But as we become more and more baptized into his power, we shall find the work advance; and being renewed in the spirit of our minds, may look forward with hope and trust in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, the Mediator; and though not favoured with any strong assurances or beatific visions, may enjoy a well-grounded belief that we shall be admitted into those mansions of bliss prepared for the righteous.

23d, 11*th M°*.—"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them."* I have long since passed the time when this exhortation could be applicable to me; and am perhaps advancing to that period, when the years draw nigh, in which I shall say, "I have no pleasure in them." Nearly on the verge of sixty-three, it is not much to be wondered at, if life have, in a good degree, lost its relish; and we may be said to pass through it, rather than enjoy it. Though the "sun or the light" are not yet darkened, yet they are so obscured, (or rather the deficiency

* Eccl. xii. 1.

of sight is so great,) as to make time often hang heavy on my hands; and a defect of hearing is frequently an exercise of patience, when conversation is passing around me. With these warnings, that this tenement is nearly worn out, and approaching towards decay, I likewise feel a want of energy, that seems almost to make me shrink from any exertion, and at times, to speak metaphorically, even the grasshopper becomes a burden. In this state there is consolation derived from considering that we have remembered our Creator in the days of our youth, without waiting to be driven to it by the debilities and infirmities of age. Though I doubt few of us can take a retrospective view, and look back without many regrets; yet, if we can say, with the Psalmist, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth," there is room to hope that mercy will supersede judgment, and that our souls will not be gathered "with sinners." He likewise adds, "but as for me, I will walk in mine integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me."*

Though my backslidings have been many, I have desired to love and serve thee; there-

* Psalm xxvi. 8, 9, 11.

fore, I beseech thee, O Lord, to redeem me from evil, and be merciful to my transgressions. I am often fearful that I am not sufficiently thankful for blessings; but am more disposed to regret privations, than to number the good things I am favoured with. My feelings are not always consistent. If the world has lost its charms, and this life be only a shadow, why should there be any reluctance to quit it upon the first summons? Perhaps there are many who have no wish to go back; they are willing to approach the confines of another world; but when they get near the last point, they stop and hesitate, and are inclined to linger a little on this side. We acknowledge this life to be but a shadow, but we want an assurance, that when we quit it, we shall be in possession of a happy reality. We stand appalled at the prospect of the dark valley we must pass through, before we can become inheritors of light, and are inclined to put the evil day a little further off. We still cling to earth, as if we were afraid to lose our hold. By faith only shall we be supported through this dreary passage. The more fully we resign ourselves to the disposal of Him, who careth for us, and watcheth over us for good, the more firmly we shall feel his supporting

power. Let us trust with confidence in our guide; in Him, who has opened the way for us, and is touched with a sense of our infirmities. Thus will faith increase our hope, and hope strengthen our faith; and we shall be enabled to pass safely through the awful gloom, to the realms of everlasting night.

16*th*, 12*th* *M°*.—O thou invisible Being, be graciously pleased to enable us to approach thee through the power of faith. Our faculties cannot comprehend thee. Poor finite man can form no adequate idea of the glory of thy Majesty. But beholding the things that are visible, we are led to the contemplation of thee, the invisible God. And we are persuaded by reason as well as by revelation, that though thy throne be in Heaven, thou dwellest also amongst the children of men; and that all creation is upheld by the energy of thy power, which first brought the world into existence. And as we have thankfully to believe, that of all thy wondrous works, man is not the least under thy notice, we pray that thou wouldst bring us all into subjection to thy most Holy will; that so, order may rise out of confusion, and universal harmony prevail. And as we become thus subdued, we entreat thee more

and more to enlighten our minds with the knowledge of "thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* That so, our path may be "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."† And "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,"‡ we may, through the efficacy of redeeming power, become heirs of eternal life.

26th, 12th M°.—To teach children dissimulation in any shape, is to make a very dangerous experiment on the young and tender mind. Sincerity is the foundation of every virtue; and where openness and candour of disposition prevail, they afford the opportunity of rectifying many wrong ideas, and ingrafting right ones in their room; likewise, if any little twist appear, by being known, it may be set to rights before the improper bend become strengthened and confirmed. Our corrupt nature seems prone to deceit and hypocrisy, and I am doubtful whether it does not often cost more trouble to appear to be what we wish, than it would to become so in reality. Education should counteract this tendency, and by encouraging

* John, xvii. 3. † Prov. iv. 18. ‡ I Cor. xv. 54.

openness and sincerity, any warp, either in principle or practice, will come under our observation, and by that means give us the opportunity of guarding the young mind against its influence.

The plea I have heard made use of, in excuse for concealment and deception, is to avoid giving pain to those whose happiness we wish to promote, but who, on many subjects, both with regard to principles and actions, think differently from ourselves. This attention to the feelings of others has something plausible in appearance, and perhaps may lead parents to say to their children, "You shall do so, or so, but do not tell such, or such a near connexion, because it would give them uneasiness." I do not mean to infer that this licence would be allowed respecting any breach of morality, but only respecting those subjects on which people think differently. But can any parent suppose, that having inculcated this doctrine, he shall escape its being turned upon himself? Children are not automatons, which can be acted upon at our pleasure; they think and reason for themselves, and that sometimes at a very early age. As their years increase, they must gain more liberty; and their language will naturally be, "I will follow my in-

clinations in this or the other thing, but I will not tell my father or my mother, lest I should make them uneasy." Thus, the opportunity is lost to the parents of pointing out to their children the dangers and improprieties to which their sentiments or conduct may lead, or of opening their minds to perceive the evil tendencies of some indulgences which had not come within the view of their youthful minds. I do not mean to aver that we are bound at all times to speak "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." As we arrive at years of maturity, we have the power of discriminating, and may often see that silence is best for us; but I do aver, that if we speak, it should be the truth, and nothing but the truth; and not only the words of truth, but that they should convey truth to our hearers. If we allow ourselves latitude in this respect, we shall be in danger of losing that reverence for truth, which ought always to be impressed on our minds. If we consult our own feelings, we shall be convinced that a candid open character always meets our approbation; that the man of uprightness and integrity, on whose word we may rely, and who, we are confident, will not deceive us, has always a large share of our respect and esteem;

and that so far as any one recedes from this character, in such degree our respect and esteem will lessen, though there may still be other traits which endear the person to us, and make us wish to find excuses for that which our judgment must condemn as wrong.

Casuists sometimes put questions respecting truth, that are rather puzzling to the human mind; as, whether it might be necessary to tell a madman truth, when mischief was likely to follow? Whether one might point a finger, to make him believe a man he was in pursuit of was gone a different way from the reality? or, whether one might tell an untruth to a robber, to save one's own life, or that of a friend? Such situations are, I think, scarcely within the verge of possibility; and how the impulse of our feelings would operate in such a critical moment—a moment that would produce such terror and dismay, that we could hardly expect to be self-collected—it is very difficult to determine. But there is certainly danger in a previous decision that we may deviate from truth; for when the line is once broken through, it would be puzzling to fix the place where to stop. We should see one case so nearly resembling the first, and another so little varied from that, that the pre-

cise mark where to fix the boundary, and determine, so far shalt thou go, and no farther, would leave us in as much perplexity as we were in at the first.

1811.

6th, 1st M°.—O thou omnipotent God, the heavens declare thy glory, and the firmament sheweth thy handiwork. All creation proclaims thy wisdom, and the plenitude of thy power. As thou hast made man for a purpose of thy own glory, we beseech thee so touch his heart with thy love, that he may individually feel that thou art good as well as great, and be led to celebrate thy name with thanksgiving and praise. Every good and every perfect gift cometh from thee. Faith is thy gift, O God. Grant, we beseech thee, that it may not so fail, as to frustrate thy kindness towards us. If our belief is weak, "help thou our unbelief, O Lord." And we pray thee, O gracious God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, to compassionate our weakness, and as far as is consistent with thy will, remove our doubts; that so, like the disciple formerly, we may with full conviction on our minds exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

And as we must walk by faith, and not by sight, we entreat thee so to strengthen our faith, that we may become "more than conquerors through him that loved us;"* and having put off this veil of flesh, be admitted into those mansions, where we shall be favoured to see all things in the full vision of light.

18*th*, 1*st* M°.—Whilst in the ordering of Providence our allotment remains to be in this world, we can hardly, either by illness or any other cause, be so estranged from it as not to feel an interest in many of its concerns. If we have objects of affection, if we have loved, or if we have been beloved, we must feel an interest in whatever concerns such connexions; and I believe it arises from a wrong view of religion, if we think it necessary to abstract ourselves wholly from solicitude respecting them. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,"† is an injunction that cannot be taken literally in its full extent, for we are commanded to love one another, to love all mankind; but our love of any thing in this world must not interfere with our love of God, and our duty to him. When from

* Rom. viii. 37. † I John, ii. 15.

bodily disease or debility we conclude ourselves drawing towards that period when we must bid adieu to every thing here, it is natural to suppose that our minds will be occupied with the thoughts of that state to which we are hastening, and be anxiously solicitous to prepare for it, as well as we are able, through the assistance of the best help; and this help we shall no doubt be earnest to obtain. But the mind cannot always be employed in religious exercises and meditations. Religion is an active principle, and various virtues are constantly flowing from it, as a stream from its source: "To do good and to communicate, forget not."* This injunction may chiefly apply to those who are in health and strength, but it is not wholly confined to such; there is room for the exercise of these, as well as many other virtues, even within the limits of a sick chamber. The religious principle in a well-regulated mind will show itself not only in patience and resignation to the Divine will, but also in little attentions to the ease and comfort of those who attend upon us, that it may not be unnecessarily burdensome to them. It will also lead us to feel some interest in every thing that concerns those friends or relatives who are de-

* Heb. xiii. 16.

sirous of promoting our ease and satisfaction, and excite the wish on our part to communicate what happiness we can, even though it should be but in insignificant things. We must feel kindness and sympathy with them in their prospects, however soon we may expect our own to terminate. If we be desirous more importantly "to do good, and to communicate," it cannot be better effected than by letting the amiable virtues that flow from religion, shine forth in our conduct. Then precept will be enforced by example, and have a united influence over those whom we wish to benefit. These remarks are perhaps more applicable to a lingering illness, than to those more violent diseases, which either require to be only nursed in silence, or else, from the nature or painfulness of them, almost necessarily engross the attention. But in all cases to avail ourselves of the opportunities that offer, "to do good and to communicate," whether it be in temporals or spirituals, will afford us satisfaction.

24th, 1*st M°*.—"We walk by faith, and not by sight."* How consonant to our own feelings and experience is this assertion. We can scarcely look around us, without behold-

* II Cor. v. 7.

ing the vice and misery that are in the world. Our eyes see, and our ears hear things that we cannot but deplore; and we have repeated accounts of scenes that we not only deplore, but that, at times, strike us with terror and amazement.

That Almighty Wisdom and Goodness united with Almighty Power in creating a world in which so much sin and misery exist, surely calls for the exercise of faith: yet when we contemplate the beauties of the natural world, observe how every thing inanimate is formed to delight the senses, and to answer its intended use; and that man, too, respecting the body, exhibits the same wonderful skill and contrivance, it will lead to the conclusion, that the moral world, which is the more important part, and for which the natural seems designed, and to be subordinate to it, should likewise be under the same regulating power; and that, however mysterious the present order of things may appear to our finite capacities, yet they are all working progressively towards their intended end. By faith in the revelation vouchsafed us, we are led to consider our existence here only as a state of probation, to prepare us for more durable happiness hereafter.

This faith has worked wonders in all ages of the world, many instances of which are enumerated by the Apostle Paul. And if we consider ourselves, as individuals, its efficacy has enabled us to encounter many difficulties, to struggle with many evil propensities of our corrupt nature, and to endeavour to overcome them. And though we feel so much of the old leaven still prevail, that we are almost ready to despair, and think our labour has been in vain, saying, like the disciples formerly, "We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing,"* yet, through the prevalence of faith, we again renew the toil; we struggle and labour again, and with fresh hope, follow the word of command. The outward revelation of the promises of God, as well as the internal feelings of our own minds, may convince us that our labour will not be in vain; but that however long we may have to wait for the completion of our wishes, they will be most assuredly crowned with success in the end. Let us then encourage this holy, living faith, which purifies the soul. It was to prove efficacious, and remove mountains, even though small as a grain of mustard-seed. And if we feel capable

* Luke, v. 5.

of exerting only a little strength, to pray for its increase, we are assured by sacred writ that it will not be in vain.

26th, 2d M°.—[*Death of S. W. at the age of twenty-one.*]—Her calmness and resignation through her illness afforded much consolation to her family, as she was perfectly sensible to the last, aware of her danger, and willing to be removed; expressing her trust that it would be to future happiness. The Psalmist says, respecting the just, or rather to those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness."* But when we see one falling on the right hand, and another on the left, we can scarcely avoid having some fears excited for those who are near and dear to us, if not particularly for ourselves. Our ground of hope and confidence arises from the faith, that the good hand of Providence orders all things for the best; and though this will not wholly prevent anxiety respecting the dispensations that may be allotted us, yet it is certainly the best

* Psalm xci. 5, 6.

means of keeping our minds tranquil, and resigned to the disposal of that Being, who knows better what is good and profitable for us, than we do ourselves.

I have often thought an infectious disorder in a family a peculiar trial. It not only excites fears, but often produces great hesitation how we ought to act. For though one would not wish to run hither and thither in consternation, as if God could not preserve us any where, and in any place that he thought fit, yet neither should we carelessly run into danger. We have faculties given us to judge and to act for ourselves, and seem under the necessity of exerting those faculties, either in doing or forbearing.

14*th*, 4*th M°*.—When we contemplate the infinitude of thy power, O Lord, we are humbled with the consideration that we are but as atoms in thy sight. Yet, as thou hast revealed to us by the lip of truth, that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without thee, and that we are of more value than many sparrows, it encourages us to pray for the continuance of thy providential care; and that however abased, however depressed we may be, thou wilt still afford us succour;

and grant that, through a Redeemer's love, we may be presented at last before the throne of thy grace, and accepted of thee; which is the ardent desire and utmost wish of our souls.

8*th*, 5*th M°*.—Whether human nature be capable of pure disinterested love, is a question sometimes agitated. I believe it possible; but in the present state of things, it would be difficult to define where it existed. With regard to the Supreme Being, who is most worthy of our love, we must acknowledge that we love him, because he first loved us. The love of God and the happiness annexed to it, are too strongly associated in our ideas, for us to be able to separate them. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,"* has been inculcated with its consequent reward. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."† This self-interested love, God has declared he will accept; and we need not attempt to make ourselves wiser than our Maker, or straiten the terms on which he, in his condescending

* Deut. vi. 5. † I Cor. ii. 9.

goodness, has agreed to receive us into the arms of his everlasting love. But notwithstanding our weakness and imperfections, I think there is a natural principle within us, that leads to admire whatever is worthy of admiration, and to love that which is lovely, independently of any benefit resulting from it to ourselves. If we saw a fellow-being exalted above others, by his understanding, talents, and virtues, we could not withhold our admiration. If, added to the above, he were mild, humble, and benevolent, full of love and good works, we should certainly feel a degree of love for such a character, though we could only behold him at a distance, without coming within the sphere of his activity. I think it would be a spontaneous feeling of the mind, without any effort. If we did not love that which is so lovely, it must proceed from something wrong in ourselves.

7th, 7th M°.—"Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"* To be followers of that which is good, comprehends a great deal. It will lead to complying with the exhortations we received this morning. "Stand in awe, and

* I Pet. iii. 13.

sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."* To commune with our own hearts, and be still, is the way to receive instruction. And as light opens upon our minds, we shall have a spiritual discernment of those truths which are written in the Gospel. We shall feel that not only what is to be known of God is manifested within, but that strength and ability to walk in obedience to the knowledge we receive, must be imparted also from the same source. As our minds are open to receive the first dawnings of light, and to comply with that which it makes manifest, we shall find it gradually increase, and our path will become like that of the just man, which "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."†

15*th*, *First day morning*.—"Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Perhaps an outline for our conduct might easily be drawn from the precepts of the Gospel. But in an affair of so much importance, I often feel anxiously solicitous that my faith may rest upon the sure foundation; that I may believe what I ought to believe, and reject what I ought to reject, as well as prac-

* Psalm iv. 4. † Prov. iv. 18.

tise what I ought to practise. I think I feel no seeds of rebellion in my heart, no disposition to reject the counsel of God in any respect, so far as I can clearly discern it. Yet, in a situation so awful as that in which we are placed, wherein Eternity seems to hang on the actions of time, I cannot say that my mind is always unclouded by doubts, or that the prospect appears clear and bright before me. Sometimes my spirits are depressed with fears; though, at other times, animated with hope; and I trust that a degree of living faith in the goodness and mercy of God, will preserve me through the heights and depths of this uncertain world. The Apostles said unto the Lord, "Increase our faith."* If they, while present with him, found this application necessary, no wonder that we also should find it needful to put up the same prayer, and solicit that any remains of unbelief may be removed, lest the blessings we are desirous of should not be obtained. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."† I believe sufficiently to lead me to apply to thee, as the only true helper; strengthen my faith where thou seest it weak, and enable me to rely with full confidence in thy wisdom, power, and goodness; and that

* Luke, xvii. 5. † Mark, ix. 24.

whosoever cometh to thee, thou wilt in no wise cast off.

11*th M°*.—O Lord God, we are humbled and abased before thee, when we look back upon our numberless transgressions, and consider the proneness we feel in ourselves to evil. We thank thee, O Lord, for thy inestimable gift of Jesus Christ, who has opened for us a door of hope, that through Him, we may obtain the remission of our sins; that, by our sincere repentance, our transgressions will be forgiven, and our iniquities remembered no more. Thus, when we lament our weaknesses and infirmities, we need not sink into despair; seeing that, according to the doctrine of the Apostle, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*

Strengthen us, we beseech thee, O Lord, more and more fully to obey his commandments, and follow his precepts, that being purified through faith, we may be presented before the throne of thy Grace, and join in saying, "Blessing and honour, and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."†

* I John, ii. 1. † Rev. v. 13.

28th, 11th M°.—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."* This was the exhortation of our Saviour, who was, no doubt, well acquainted with the nature of man, and what course it was necessary for him to pursue, to prepare for a state of happiness hereafter. He never encourages his followers to imagine that a state of temporal ease and indulgence will fall to their portion; he rather points out to them the necessity of a constant warfare, a struggle with all their evil tempers and inclinations, as well as tribulations from without, which all who are not of the spirit of the world must inevitably encounter. The seeds of our corrupt nature begin to appear in our infantile state. Impatience and anger are perhaps the first fruits that show themselves: as our intellects open, the passion of revenge begins to operate; and at a very early period, a child will feel the pain of a hurt suspended, by a blow being returned upon even an inanimate thing that had occasioned it.

We may remember that the same passions that produce evil, lead likewise to good, under proper control; and whether such an admixture in our constitution is not neces-

* Luke, ix. 23.

sary to produce those energies which are requisite to form a good character, is not for us to determine. As the reasoning faculties gain strength, we see the necessity of keeping the passions under subjection: reason points out what ought to be done, but falls short in putting it in execution; we must, as dependant creatures, apply for help to perform that good which reason has pointed out.

How we came to be placed in a state where so many trials are to be encountered, the flesh warring "against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,"* will prove but a fruitless inquiry: we feel that it is so, and if we are wise, shall act accordingly; trusting in the goodness of God, and resting in the persuasion that this probationary state is the best adapted to prepare us for that future happiness for which He has created us.

I believe, whoever examine their own feelings and propensities, must be sensible that there is something in their nature which leads to evil, and which they want assistance to overcome; and perhaps it is not less profitable for them to look up to their Heavenly Father for help, than it is for a helpless child to look up for assistance to its earthly

* Gal. v. 17.

parent. Were we placed in a state of imbecility, standing in need of help, and unable to attain it, our lot might appear hard; but we are as sure of finding the necessary assistance when we seek it, as a child is of finding assistance from a good parent; a parent who will seek its welfare, and guide it in the road to happiness. To accomplish this, the earthly parent often finds discipline needful; and as the same corrupt nature remains with us in riper years, it may lead us rationally to conclude that our blessed Redeemer saw the continuance of discipline necessary, and that to deny ourselves and take up the cross, was the only mode for our purification. We shall find exercise enough for this denial of self, in the daily intercourse of common life, without any of those voluntary humiliations and abstinences which sometimes engender pride. If we watch over ourselves, and with vigilance endeavour to keep down every wrong temper and improper disposition, I believe that we shall not only feel that we have a cross to bear, and many self-denials to endure, but shall also be engaged to pray for help, and that we may be strengthened to overcome. And though, by degrees, evil may be subdued, yet I doubt if we shall ever attain to such a

state, as to say that a Christian life is not a state of warfare. After all our endeavours, we shall be still pressing "toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus."*

12*th M°*.—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."†

This is not a dead faith, a mere assent of the mind. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."‡ Righteousness must flow from faith, as a stream from its fountain; faith works by love, to the purifying of the soul. If we really believe that Christ came into the world to redeem us from evil, and to instruct us in the way of salvation, how can we do otherwise than endeavour to follow his example, and walk according to his precepts? If we think we have faith, without any effects flowing from it, or any fruit being produced by it, we shall certainly deceive ourselves, and in the awful day of account, be in danger of receiving the sentence, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity," "I never knew you."§

* Phil. iii. 14. † John, iii. 16. ‡ Rom. x. 10.
§ Matt. vii. 23.

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15*th*, 1*st M°*.—O Lord God, suffer us not, we beseech thee, to be deluded by any who may say, "Lo, here is Christ,"* or, lo, he is there; but preserve our minds steady in that faith which leads to salvation. And though one may say, this is the way, and another, that, keep us, we humbly pray thee, from deviating either to the right hand, or to the left. Neither suffer us to be led away by an impatient desire to find Him whom our soul loveth, but quietly wait thy appointed time for the manifestation of Christ in our hearts. That being led and guided by his spirit, we may be built up in the most holy faith, and in the confidence that thou wilt be found of all those who seek thee with sincerity. Thus, O Lord, may we be comforted with a gleam of hope, and not be utterly cast down by the discouragements that surround us; but being strengthened by Him, who declared that he would be with his disciples to the end of the world, we may stand firm against every assault, and in due time experience thy salvation.

* Matt. xxiv. 23.

18*th*, 1*st M°*.—Perhaps a query may arise, how is Christ manifested in our hearts? By subduing all the evil propensities of our corrupt nature, and substituting in their room love to God, and love to man. By giving us "joy and peace in believing."* By our considering Him as our all in all, and looking to him alone for strength, hope, and consolation. We possess no inherent power of our own. "We live, move, and have our being" in Him who created us. God so compassionated our depravity, that he gave us his beloved Son, not only to be a ransom for our transgressions, but to redeem us from all evil. As we feel his baptizing power operating in our souls, struggling for good, and assisting us to overcome evil, so far is he manifested to us. And as we give way to this influence, and submit to his governing principle within us, so far is his kingdom erected in our hearts.

Our best interests are concerned in coming under the sway of his righteous sceptre. He manifests himself in mercy, and he manifests himself in judgment: and the more we attend to his manifestations, the more clear will they appear; keeping down all wrong things and wrong dispositions, and bringing

* Rom. xv. 13.

us under the obedience of faith. Thus will He become our "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,"* and finally give us an inheritance with the saints in light.

22d, 1st M°.—Oh for an increase of living faith! This is often the prayer of my soul, when tossed on the sea of this tempestuous world. Long have public affairs borne an awful appearance; and the attempts at robbery, and shocking murders, that have been committed within these few weeks, seem to fill the mind with terror and dismay.

Why so many dreadful evils should be permitted under the government of a merciful and good Providence, is a query that will sometimes obtrude itself. But how can that which is finite, comprehend the counsels of Him who is infinite? Let us remember, that we must "walk by faith, not by sight."† The language of the Most High, through his prophet, is, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." "For, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."‡

As obedient little children confide in their

* I Cor. i. 30. † II Cor. v. 7. ‡ Isaiah, lv. 8, 9.

earthly parents, and though they cannot always understand their movements, or comprehend why they do things, yet always look to them for guidance and assistance, and cling to them for protection, so should we, who have often felt and acknowledged the goodness of our heavenly Father, rely on his protecting power, and trust that all things are working together for good.

When our faith seems almost ready to fail, we may derive some consolation from the instruction of the Apostle to the Romans, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."* This shows great tenderness for those who are weak in the faith, and encourages them in the belief that though it may be but small, even as a grain of mustard-seed, they will not be rejected; though they should be kept from those things that may stagger it, and prevent its increase. Nothing but confidence in God can calm the mind under the various shocks it may meet with: surely then, it will be wise to cultivate in ourselves this trust and reliance, as our only source of consolation through the vicissitudes of time; not dwelling always on the gloomy side of things, but letting the bright side sometimes have

* Rom. xiv. 1.

its turn. Thus, through the prevalence of faith and hope, we shall be enabled to press forward to the end; when we shall no longer see things as "through a glass, darkly,"* but shall have them opened to us in the clear vision of light.

23d.—I think I am never happier than when I can feelingly trust in the goodness and protection of that Being who created us. In this state of mind a holy tranquillity seems to cover the soul; all the wayward passions subside, and even the terrors of darkness are vanquished. As our affections are raised to heavenly objects, those that are earthly recede from our view. Things temporal would have no preponderance in the scale with things that are eternal; but that the temporal things are seen and present with us, whilst those that are eternal can only be contemplated by the eye of faith.

If we consider this life only as a state of probation, a state designed to prepare us for a better existence, all the goods and the evils of it will sink in our estimation: and reason as well as revelation confirms us in the truth of this opinion. In the various views we take of the world, we are animated with this

* I Cor. xiii. 12.

persuasion: our faith and our hope are revived, and notwithstanding all the discouragements that surround us, we press forward with alacrity to the end of our race: knowing (as far as finite creatures can know any thing) that our labour will not be in vain, but that we shall receive the consummation of our wishes, an eternal mansion in the heavens which will never fade away.

1*st*, 4*th* *M°*.—I suppose there are many unbelievers respecting the doctrine of spiritual communion. As it can neither be described nor defined, nor become an object of any of our outward faculties, it seems impossible to say any thing to enforce the truth of the doctrine, but what the Scriptures assert respecting it. Yet I think we may appeal to serious, devout minds, whether they have not sometimes felt themselves so raised above every thing earthly, and their spirits so elevated to Heaven, that they have been ready to exclaim, in the language of Jacob, "Surely, the Lord is in this place:"* or when they have been waiting in awful silence, have they not sometimes been so enwrapped in holy, devout feelings, that, like the disciples on the mount of Transfiguration, they

* Gen. xxviii. 16.

have said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here,"* let us make here a tabernacle. We have found that which our souls have longed for; and can say, through a degree of living faith, "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."†

1*st*, 4*th M°*.—"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."‡ This is a short summary drawn up by the Apostle Paul, for the use of Timothy, and no doubt contains what he means by the "mystery of godliness."

If, in that early period, the scheme of our redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ was a mystery, it seems not likely that it should now be more clear. We are told that the thing was, but have no clue to guide us to find out how, or in what manner it was effected. It is a mystery entirely above our finite capacities to comprehend. We are informed that, through repentance and faith in Christ, we shall receive the remission of our sins, and obtain salvation: but *how* "God

* Matt. xvii. 4. † Psalm xvi. 11. ‡ I Tim. iii. 16.

was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,"* is not for us to fathom. The whole tenour of Scripture informs us, that those who fear God and work righteousness will be accepted of him; and if, with sincerity of heart, we avail ourselves of the offers of salvation, which God in his mercy has vouchsafed, I trust we may leave those mysterious parts which have troubled and perplexed some of the wisest in all ages. We are commanded to come unto Christ, like little children: that is, in simplicity, willing to be taught and instructed in the right way. "Even the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."† So plain, according to the prophet, is the way of salvation.

Certainly, then, if we feel this singleness of heart, such a portion of light will be afforded us as is necessary to guide us right, without our perplexing ourselves with the endeavour to find out things beyond our comprehension. Let us keep as near as we can to those ideas that Scripture authorizes; and though the same things may be viewed in different lights by different people, and different inferences drawn from them, this should not break in upon true harmony. I should regret that it ever became necessary

* II Cor. v. 19. † Isaiah, xxxv. 8.

in our Society to sign articles of faith, or even that we should be obliged to declare opinions respecting any of those mysterious subjects, which the human mind can neither develop nor understand, though it may contemplate them with thankfulness and admiration. I entertain no doubt, that articles of faith are much more generally subscribed as an initiation into one or another particular society, than from any serious consideration of what the articles themselves contain; and when they have been closely investigated, they have often proved that bone of bitter contention, which has split the Christian world into such multitudes of sects.

19*th*, 4*th* M°.—My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."* Excellent would this resolution be, were we in possession of the inherent power to fulfil it. But weak and dependant, both in body and in mind, poor, frail mortals learn sometimes, by sad experience, that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"† aright; but that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."‡ All boasting is here excluded; we cannot even say that we will

* Job, xxvii. 6. † Jerem. x. 23. ‡ Psalm xxxvii. 23.

do well, any farther than as we are assisted by that Power, through whom we are enabled to perform every good word and work. Here then, is an exercise of deep humility, and an inducement to look unto Him who came to "redeem us from all iniquity."* Peter, no doubt, thought he could have confidence in himself, that he should never deny his Lord and Master; but the event proved otherwise; and I believe, some of us in this day have been most apt to fail, when we have trusted to our own strength and our own powers, instead of looking to Him for help, who can alone preserve us, and order our steps aright. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."†

We may trust that this state of humble dependance is most profitable for us: not to lead us to despondency, or to slacken our own exertions; for, if with sincerity of heart we endeavour to do our best, and pray for the Divine blessing and assistance, we may rest assured that it will not be withheld; since nothing will be required of us, but what our Maker and Redeemer will strengthen us to perform.

26th, 5th M°.—It often seems to me cause

* Titus, ii. 14. † 1 Cor. x. 12.

of thankfulness, when I feel my mind not only covered with universal love, and disposed to wish well to all mankind; but when, confined within a narrower circle, I feel the disposition to give up some of my own conveniences and satisfactions, for the gratification or accommodation of others. This disposition, I am persuaded, does not contribute more to the happiness of other people, than it does to our own; for I believe it is so constituted in the nature of things, that we never confer happiness, without feeling some return of it in our own bosoms. The disposition to fret and fume at every little disappointment, or when we cannot command things just as we wish, is an incessant cause of disquietude. In our intercourse through life, we shall meet with many things in opposition to our own sentiments and inclinations; many little rubs and trials, which, to an irritable mind, are sources of much disquiet. We often see the impropriety of giving way to our irritable feelings on these occasions, and perhaps in some measure endeavour to struggle against them. But though reason can point out these failings, its force is not sufficient to remove them. It is but reason and passion striving together; self struggling with self.

How then, must these evil propensities of our nature be overcome? By considering that the same Power that commanded the boisterous waves to be still, must be likewise applied to on the lesser occasions. If we see any very heavy storm approaching, or look forward to any great conflict wherein we doubt our own strength, our minds are immediately turned to Him who has all power, with prayers for his assistance. Let us keep in view, that in all the lesser exercises of our faith and patience, that same Power is the only one that can enable us to get the better of our corrupt nature. Contesting in our own power and with our own strength, without a reliance upon Him for help, will avail us little. Even the small curl that ruffles upon the ocean, will no more subside at our command, than the boisterous waves. We must feel our own insufficiency and dependance, before we shall be induced to look unto him for strength; and when we have been thus humbled, and in the consciousness of our own weakness, we seek for help from Him who is alone able to help us, how often have we found every evil disposition to subside at his command, and a holy tranquillity cover our souls. I believe it is by constantly turning our attention to Him who came to

redeem us from all evil, that we can attain quietness of mind and rectitude of conduct. Let us consider him as ever present with us; by his secret reproofs, checking us from evil, even in the bud, and strengthening us in the performance of every thing that is good, whether it be in overcoming the secret corruptions of our own minds, or in our more obvious conduct. Thus, under his guidance shall we go on from strength to strength, and be partakers of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

28th, 5th M°.—We had some remarks, this Yearly Meeting, on the danger of associating much with those not of our Society, not from any idea of attributing particular holiness to ourselves, but as it leads to an assimilation with the customs, manners, and spirit of the world, which the principles of our Society testify against.

Observation must convince us, that it rarely happens that those of our Society who mingle much with others, retain that simplicity of dress and behaviour, which is considered as its characteristic. The temptations to deviate from it are certainly greatly increased by intercourse and visiting with those of other persuasions; and though many topics

of discourse may be familiar to both parties, yet the latitude allowed by others in what the world deems innocent amusements, will be very apt to excite the desire in young people, of being partakers with them in such things, and of throwing aside those peculiarities which seem as a bar in the way to indulgence, though considered by many amongst us, as a hedge of preservation from the temptations that are in the world, as well as worthy to be practised for their own intrinsic propriety. These sentiments do not preclude us from uniting with those of other societies for any benevolent purposes, or from that friendly intercourse by which we can be useful to any, but are only intended to guard us from falling into temptation, and to strengthen us to keep a watch over ourselves, that we may follow the advice of the Apostle, not to be "conformed to this world."*

O Lord God, grant, I beseech thee, that as I draw nearer to the verge of another life, I may increasingly experience such a change of heart, as may prepare me for thy heavenly kingdom. And as thou hast declared in Scripture, that through faith in Christ we shall receive the remission of our sins, and

* Rom. xii. 2.

become heirs of salvation, I earnestly pray that his power may so operate in my heart, that I may not only be strengthened to overcome sin in the outward act, but that every evil feeling that arises from our corrupt nature may also be subdued. Thus, as years increase, may I press forward from grace to grace; and whether through the awful conflict I may be animated by the radiant beams of hope, or ready to sink under the misgivings of doubt, still, O Lord, do thou uphold me with thy power, and receive my spirit into the arms of thy everlasting love.

On seventh day morning, the 27th of the 6th M°., a little before eleven o'clock, my husband suddenly departed this life. He had previously complained of a pain in the stomach, and had some faintness; but after taking breakfast he seemed better, and we thought the illness going off, but he said the pain was not removed, and that he was chilly. We apprehend a return of faintness closed the scene. I had often looked forward to such a sudden event, from his constitutional complaints; and from our approaches to advanced age, had frequently queried in my own mind which of us would be first called from this scene of action.

The lot is now decided, and I have only to look forward to the same change, which according to the common course of things, I cannot expect to be long before it arrives. But observation on my own feelings, as well as on those of others, convinces me that though we view things in this manner, either for ourselves or our near connexions, still there is some space left between. We see the stroke near, but not just at hand; as time passes on, this little space remains to be filled; some short interval continues in idea, till after all, we are taken by surprise. I am persuaded that as age increases, our feelings, like our passions, are less keen than at an earlier period. Things that cannot be of long concernment to us, we view with less solicitude than in younger years, when our plans for the enjoyments of this life are all overthrown, and the fabric which our ideas had erected is entirely demolished. Notwithstanding this sentiment, I do not know that I am less anxious than formerly for the welfare and happiness of those that are likely to remain behind me.

Under the present trial, I feel much cause for thankfulness on many accounts—that the event happened at home, amongst our friends, ready to assist us—that we very speedily ob-

tained medical advice, who assured us that nothing could have been done, if they had been here at the instant; that it appeared to be without the least struggle, or any violent pain, and that we had reason to believe a rather sudden removal was according to the wish of the deceased. These are sources of satisfaction, and claim our thankfulness; but some perturbation of mind must take place; as this gradually subsides, we may trust it will be succeeded by those tranquil religious feelings which may be of lasting benefit to our souls.

12*th*, 7*th* M°.—Most gracious God, suffer, I beseech thee, the sacred influence of thy Holy Spirit to guide and conduct me through the remainder of my days; through the remnant of time that may be allotted me in this world; that maintaining a state of watchfulness, I may be ready to receive the summons to depart, whenever it shall please thee to send it. I beseech thee, enlighten my eyes and strengthen my judgment, that I may be able to decide with clearness in any thing wherein I am called upon to act; and not only enable me to decide with clearness what I ought to do, but so rectify my will, that it may be brought into conformity with thy

most holy will in all things—that acknowledging thy wisdom and goodness, I may always confide in thee, and in truth and sincerity say, " Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

9*th*, 8*th M°*.—The weather very wintry; a great deal of wet, and so cold, that we have several times had a fire; the sun rarely seen. Every thing wears a gloomy aspect—a threatened war with America—no prospect of peace any where else—provisions very dear, and the miseries of the poor very great, notwithstanding much attention and liberal contributions. What will be the issue, is not in man's foresight to form a judgment; but we must endeavour to rely on Him who rules the world in his wisdom, and who can bring good out of those things, which are, to our dim eyesight and confined views, apparently evil.

9*th*, 10*th M°*.—Many seasons of anxiety fall to our lot in our passage through life: that they may be sanctified to our benefit, is the earnest prayer of my soul; that our trust in God, and confidence in his goodness may never fail, remembering, that according to the words of the Apostle, " Whom the

Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* Many are the heights and depths through which we have been mercifully preserved; and we may trust while we rely on him, that we shall never be deserted by his all-sustaining Power.

15*th*, 10*th* M°.—When I consider the very trying situations that many are placed in, even within the compass of my small knowledge and acquaintance, I feel my spirits sometimes so depressed, that I have been ready to conclude, that the best thing which could happen to any of us would be, to get well out of the world. But how would this accord with the idea of our present existence being only a probationary state, to prepare us for a more happy one hereafter? We must endeavour, through faith, to let patience have its perfect work. We do not always view the world, and the things of the world in this gloomy light: though anxieties sometimes press heavy upon us, there are other seasons wherein we experience a calm and tranquil enjoyment, and feel our souls raised in grateful thankfulness to the Bestower of every blessing. And even in the rugged part of the road through which we

* Heb. xii. 6.

have to travel, some reviving prospects open to cheer us in our way, to strengthen our hope, and stimulate our courage, that we may not utterly faint.

20th.—When we consider how prone we are to evil, and the necessity of discipline to correct our errors and purify our souls, we are sometimes strengthened to pray that the Lord's hand would not spare, nor his eye pity, until he had made us what he would have us to be. Yet the pressure of affliction is sometimes so heavy, and the prospect so full of dismay, that we can scarcely forbear saying, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" perhaps without being able in that meekness and resignation which becomes such dependant creatures, to add, with truth and sincerity of heart, "not my will, but thine be done."

We dare not pray for any thing contrary to the Divine will, but perhaps we can scarcely forbear aspirations that *that* Will may be to remove the stroke away from us. We know that God wills our sanctification and redemption, and that he best knows what is good for us, and what means are most conducive to that end.

We desire, O Lord, to bow in awful submission before thee; that every will may be subdued that counteracts thy most Holy will, and that we may receive with patient resignation, whatever thou mayst appoint. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, we beseech thee, in temporals as well as spirituals. Thou alone canst restore peace to the wounded soul, and health to the diseased body. Strengthen our faith and confidence that in due time all things will work together for good; and so humble our souls before thee, that we may receive with thankfulness all thy dispensations. Support us, we beseech thee, through all the various struggles we may have to encounter; and so enlighten our minds and guide our conduct, that whatever may be the result respecting temporal things, we may not have to look back with unavailing regret.

1*st*, 11*th M°*.—Evils that we dread are frequently borne better when they fall to our lot, than we could have any expectation of; and we should endeavour, as far as we can, in all cases, not to have our minds fixed on temporal things, but to look forwards to those which are eternal; having faith to believe

with the Apostle Paul, that "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

28*th*, 11*th M°*.—In seasons of the greatest depression, I think I have never been wholly deserted by hope: not that fallacious hope which can only be satisfied with having the completion of our wishes in all circumstances; but that hope which arises from faith in the goodness and mercy of God; that he will not afflict us beyond what is for our benefit, and that if he in his wisdom should not see meet to remove the evil under which we suffer, he will either mitigate it, or increase our strength, so that we shall be enabled to bear it; and though "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward,"† yet that "affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground:"‡ but that all are under the providential care of Him who created and upholds all things by his power. This hope

* II Cor. iv. 17, 18. † Job, v. 7. ‡ Job, v. 6.

often cheers and invigorates the mind, even though the prospects before us may have but a sombre appearance.

We never feel the benefit of being amongst kind relatives and friends more than in times of sickness and anxiety; and I often feel comforted with the thought, that my children will be left amongst those who will care for them, when my head is laid in the silent grave.

4th, 12*th M°*.—A patient submission to the Divine will, under every dispensation, is a more acceptable sacrifice than any offering we can make. If we are stopped short in our career of pleasure, or when pursuing any temporal gratifications, a little serious reflection sometimes leads to the acknowledgment that it may be beneficial to our best interests. But if we are stopped in our progress in those undertakings which are laudable, and which are not only useful employments for ourselves, but productive of benefit to others, a double portion of faith seems requisite to reconcile us to the disappointment. Yet such is the mysterious government of Providence, that we often see the most useful members of society cut off, by what we are apt to term a premature death; or disabled,

by ill health, from the exertion of those energies which promised to be beneficial to mankind.

There are passive duties as well as active; and we must consider that it is not our own righteousness that we are to go about to establish, but the righteousness that is by faith. If we are pursuing this principle in our conduct, however zealous we may be in our endeavours to accomplish those things that seem right and proper, or that we may judge will be useful to others, we shall at the same time endeavour patiently to submit to a prevention, arising from whatever cause; trusting that the watchful eye of Providence remains over all; and whether we are called to the performance of active duties, or laid aside for a time, as servants of our supreme Master, a dutiful submission and acquiescence with his will, is requisite on our part.

1813.

3d, 1st M°.—If we look up towards the heavens, or down towards the earth, we cannot do otherwise than behold the display of infinite Power. But to be the subjects of infinite Power, if not accompanied with infinite Goodness, would be a source of terror

rather than consolation. But respecting the human race, where shall we look in merely externals, for the traces of infinite Goodness? Infinite Power and infinite Wisdom are conspicuous in all the works of creation: every thing that exists is fitted for the end designed; and the animal creation seem to rejoice in the goodness of their Creator, having their wants and their gratifications proportioned to each other. Is man, then, the only discontented being who goes mourning on his way? Though he meets with many things to regale his senses, and afford transient enjoyment, yet he falls short of that present happiness, which is the portion of inferior creatures. Is not this a strong proof that this state of existence constitutes but a part of his being? Man has the gift of reflection; and to reflect, is to contemplate the trials and afflictions of man in his present state, and to look forward to the future with solicitude and anxiety. Man, though placed in Paradise, became corrupted: he was tempted, fell in with the temptation, ate of the forbidden fruit, and was expelled from that state of happiness which he was otherwise to have enjoyed. If we would contemplate infinite Goodness, we must withdraw our mind's eye from beholding the

miseries of war, where such havoc is made amongst thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures, who are commanded to slaughter each other, by a being like themselves, only elevated to power. We must likewise withdraw our minds from dwelling too much on the wretchedness of poverty, where a family of half-famished children are looking in vain to their parents for a supply of their wants, even to those parents who would be glad to work for them, could they find any employment: notwithstanding these scenes call forth our sensibility, it seems almost impossible, in the present situation of things, to afford any adequate relief. I believe infinite Goodness can only be comprehended by the internal feelings of the mind, co-operating with that revelation dispensed to us in the Holy Scriptures. Here we are taught to confide in the goodness of God, and, through faith and hope, look forward to permanent happiness.

In the Old Testament, before a future state was so clearly revealed, worldly prosperity and happiness were often promised as a reward to the righteous: but the Gospel dispensation breathes a very different language. The whole tenour of it precludes

us from the expectation of finding the goodness of God in dispensing temporal blessings; we are exhorted to seek and to pursue those which are eternal.

The lip of Truth pronounced a blessing on the poor and the afflicted, whilst woe was denounced against those who received their consolation in this world. A renunciation of the world, and all worldly tempers, a taking up our daily cross, and, through faith and obedience, looking forward to future scenes for our reward, is the uniform doctrine of the Gospel. The language of our Saviour is, "In the world ye shall have trouble;" but in Him we are to expect peace. In this holy peace, bestowed by the Saviour of the world, we feel the infinite Goodness of God extended to man; and in this view every thing around us bears a different aspect. It seems consistent with the nature of rational beings, to endeavour to view things as they really are; and it may inspire an increase of confidence, that, as we fall so short of that happiness here, for which we seem designed, and for which we have proportionate faculties, that we shall feel the accomplishment of our wishes in a state that shall be hereafter. And this should en-

courage us to press on with alacrity, lest, respecting ourselves as individuals, the end designed should be frustrated.

Notwithstanding there are many things for which we cannot account in the visible creation, yet in whatever our capacities can comprehend, we see every thing admirably fitted for the purpose for which it was designed, the means always adequate to the end. Is not this ground of assurance that the government of Providence over the moral world, however incomprehensible to us, is likewise working its intended end, the salvation and final happiness of man? Under the influence of this impressive faith, we contemplate, and confide in infinite Goodness; we thank God, and take courage. Though encompassed with those things that appear to be evils, we consider them all, through infinite Mercy, working together for good. We endeavour to fulfil, with alacrity, the duties of our station; comforting the afflicted, and relieving the distressed, as far as our ability extends; and, animated with faith and hope, can often acknowledge the goodness of God even in bestowing temporal blessings, which, though we are not to centre in them, are subjects for grateful praise.

6th, 2d M°.—Prayer is an ascending of the soul to God; a thirsting for him, and feeling desires raised to be united to him, as the Source of all good. It is said of a wicked man, that "God is not in all his thoughts."* Of a righteous man, it may be said, that God *is* in all his thoughts. All his employments and transactions have a reference to God: to gain His favour is the predominant desire of his soul; his affections are set upon Heaven, and heavenly things, and the breathings of his soul are aspirations to the Supreme Good. This is the prayer of the heart, which strengthens and vivifies, while it finds acceptance at the throne of Grace. The righteous man feels his own weakness and infirmity: he knows how frail he is; he looks up to God for help, counsel and preservation: if he fall, he knows where to seek for pardon and reconciliation. It is said of the just man, that though he fall, he shall rise again. Though deeply humbled, he trusts in the mercy of a Redeemer, who has promised, that, upon true repentance, he shall be forgiven, and his sins blotted out. Thus, upon the wings of faith and hope, he endeavours to ascend to Heaven; he is ani-

* Psalm x. 4.

mated with fresh courage to pursue his way: his confidence is revived by the declaration of Him who said, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find:"* and, through this strength, he finds acceptance at the throne of Grace, and worships the Father of spirits, in spirit and in truth.

2d, 3d M°.—Last night, in a wakeful mood, busied and perplexed with the cares of this life, and looking forward with anxiety, my mind seemed comforted with the revival of the sentence, "Trust in God." Could we but confide in him as we ought, our anxieties respecting the things of this life would be greatly alleviated. Trust in God, calms the weary spirits, and composes the mind under all the vicissitudes of life. We look forward with hope, that all things will be ordered for the best, and feel tranquillity, even though encountering the various troubles that surround us. Oh that our faith may never fail! but that, "although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines;"† though various disappointments and trials should cloud all our prospects respecting this world, we may yet adopt the language of the prophet, "I will rejoice

* Matt. vii. 7. † Hab. iii. 17, 18.

in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!"

9th, 5th M°.—The parable of the labourers in the vineyard, who were called to work at various hours of the day, affords great encouragement to those who are willing to labour, even though they may have been idle till the eleventh hour, often compared to the evening of life. Perhaps at first sight, it may not be equally encouraging to those who are called at an early hour to go into the vineyard and work. They may be tempted to say, our reward will be no greater if we "bear the burden and heat of the day," than that of those who "have wrought but one hour."* But let us remember that it is not at our option at what time we shall be called upon to labour, and that a willingness on our part to obey the summons whenever we receive it, is indispensable. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"† was the query put to those last sent into the vineyard: their answer was, "Because no man hath hired us," and they went in faith, being only told, "Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." Nothing appears but that it was necessity, not choice, that occasioned their

* Matt. xx. 6, 7, 12. † Ibid.

standing idle so long, as there was no hesitation in going, when called, at any of the hours mentioned. And if we farther consider the parable as symbolical of life, we know how difficult it is for those to labour, who are entirely unaccustomed to it, whilst others, who have been in the habit of it from an early period, get through it with ease and alacrity. Let us encourage the faith, that we are under the direction of a kind and good Master, who will assuredly not withhold from us the promised reward, though his bounty may often increase it.

11*th*, 5*th M°*.—O Lord, all power in heaven and in earth is thine. Thou sayest, Let there be light, and there is light: thou commandest, and it cometh to pass. Suffer us not, we beseech thee, ever even in the most transient glance of thought, to compare thee to an austere man or a hard master; but whatever commands thou mayst give, or whatever dispensations thou mayst allot us, give us faith to believe that they are appointed in mercy and love. And as our Saviour expressly declares, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;"* we earnestly beseech thee

* John, vi. 44.

to draw us nearer and nearer to thy heavenly kingdom. Influence our minds, we humbly pray thee, to believe in Christ Jesus, our Lord, with a saving faith; that obeying him in the simplicity of little children, we may find acceptance with thee; and that feeling our hearts touched with a sense of thy goodness and mercy, we may acknowledge, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."*

16*th*, 5*th M°*.—Great riches are great temptations. Their tendency is to lead from Christian humility, and to set up the possessors with the importance of self. Often they serve as wings to fly away to the regions of luxury and dissipation. "Give me neither poverty nor riches,"† was the prayer of one formerly who considered the danger of both states. Both have their peculiar temptations, and riches are not to be indiscriminately despised: but how few consider themselves as only stewards, and that they must give an account to their Master of all the possessions over which they have exercised their stewardship. The poor may be said to be in bondage to hard labour; but does it

* Revelations, xv. 3. † Prov. xxx. 8.

follow that the rich are free? Though they may live in the fatness of the land, and appear to dwell at ease in their possessions, yet are they in bondage to customs and fashions, and perhaps enjoy as little, or less of real liberty, than those in a lower situation.

How often is it settled, that people in affluence must live in a certain style; that they must support a particular character in life, and do as others do in the same situation; and well will it be, if they do not think it necessary to conform to some customs which are an infringement on morals. I suppose people can hardly be reckoned genteel, without ordering their servants to say that they are not at home, when they do not choose to receive company. The extenuation alleged is, We must do it to avoid giving offence, or be continually exposed to intruders. The laws of fashion will not allow us to say that we are particularly engaged, but they will permit us to say that we are not at home, though suspected, or even known to be so. But if people in high life can reconcile this, by saying that they understand one another, how is it possible to prevent the pernicious effects resulting from it on the lower classes of society? or how can masters or mistresses find fault with servants

for deceiving them, or saying they were at home, when suspected of being improperly absent?

If people would but seriously consider the dangerous consequences likely to accrue from some customs which they inadvertently adopt, it would surely be a check to their proceedings. Every deviation from truth, even in the smallest things, lessens that habitual reverence for it that we ought to feel, and which is the glory of a nation, as well as that of every individual of the community throughout all classes, from the monarch upon the throne, to the meanest of his subjects.

30*th*, 5*th M°*.—That one event happeneth to all, "one event to the righteous and to the wicked;"* that "Our Father, which is in Heaven," "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,"† is a truth often brought before our view; but let it not stagger our faith, for we are looking forward to a better country, beyond the boundaries of time. And whatever may be our allotted portion here, if we endeavour, through faith in Christ, who hath opened for us the door

* Eccl. ix. 2. † Matt. v. 45.

of salvation, conscientiously to discharge our various duties while we are possessed of mental ability, we shall, no doubt, whenever our change comes, enter into that rest prepared for the righteous.

When the faculties are gone, either from derangement or any other cause, the mind is as incapable of acting, as the body is of exertion in the decrepitude of old age; both excite the tender sympathy and care of our friends, and may perhaps afford them lessons of instruction, and call forth feelings which may prove a lasting benefit to them.

6th, 11*th M°*.—A life of ease and indulgence, I am persuaded, does not forward our progress in the road to Christian perfection. To take up a cross merely for the sake of self-discipline, may seem unnecessary. There are many crosses which we must unavoidably bear in our passage through life; therefore wilfully to inflict them on ourselves, we are ready to conclude, cannot be required of us. But there is a medium between the austerity of a convent, and the luxury of the world: and to choose this point is, I believe, our truest felicity.

However plausible self-indulgence may appear, with regard to the happiness of this

life, experience will convince us, that it has not appertaining to it, either the promise of this life, or of that which is to come.

As labour and exercise strengthen the body, and make it hardy and robust, so mental discipline strengthens the mind. If we sit down and say to ourselves, even with respect to things in their nature innocent, I will allow myself every indulgence of which my situation admits, we shall find such a resolution productive of uneasiness instead of felicity. Our wants will increase without our being able to satisfy them; effeminacy and a false delicacy will prevail; and what we shall eat, what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed, will be in danger of occupying our minds. The clothing of the husbandman and the viands of the labourer need not be adopted by those in higher ranks and stations, neither would it be possible to determine exactly, what indulgences ought to be allowed, and what rejected. Different indulgences and self-denials are adapted to different constitutions and situations in life; but let us in all states endeavour to keep our bodies in subjection, remembering that too much ease and luxury only tend to enervate the soul. Let us consider of how little importance are all things

of a temporary nature, and keep them in their due place; knowing that those who would be disciples of Christ must take up their daily cross and follow Him; not suffering their minds to be engrossed with temporal gratifications, but looking forward with an eye of faith to those that are eternal.

14*th*, 11*th* *M°*.—"*If* God will indeed be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, *then* shall the Lord be my God."*

The Creator, in merciful condescension to his creature, seems to have accepted this conditional promise. Perhaps the situation of Jacob, and the perturbed state his mind was most likely in, might contribute to make some outward evidence peculiarly necessary. Probably too, some outward manifestations of Divine power might be requisite for those who were surrounded by idolatrous nations, to strengthen their reliance upon God, and confirm their faith, that he whom their fathers worshipped was the only true God.

More noble, indeed, was the confidence of Job, who in the midst of the greatest cala-

* Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.

mities, had faith to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* Something similar likewise was the declaration of Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."† Whatever might be the allowances made to mankind in former periods, before a future state was fully made known, and when the promises were chiefly relative to worldly prosperity, no such allowances are now to be expected. In the present day, under the Gospel dispensation, when the hopes of immortality are clearly revealed to us, no *ifs* or *thens* can ever be suffered to take place. In all situations the Lord must be our God. We must love Him and confide in him with all our hearts: there must be no reserve in any shape; we must surrender to him body, soul, and spirit, with an entire submission.

In the greatest calamities that can befal us, and even when our tongues are ready to cleave to the roof of our mouths for thirst, still we know that he is our only hope; that

* Job, xiii. 15. † Hab. iii. 17, 18.

when he pleases, he can open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys."* But though we should die for thirst, we know that our Saviour and Redeemer has never promised us worldly prosperity, but a glorious state of immortality is held out as our reward. And though we should perhaps find it a hard lesson to learn to rejoice in tribulation, yet when we are animated with the hope that from the various blessed effects attending it, it will work "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"† it may well reconcile us to bear it. And as He who is called the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through sufferings, so we his followers must be contented to walk in the same path, looking forward to the "recompence of reward" at last.

9th, 12th M°.—Yesterday, a subject of painful delinquency came before our Monthly Meeting. It led me to reflection on the necessity (in every sense) of keeping the heart with all diligence, and carefully guarding against the intrusion of improper thoughts; once indulged, they are in danger of leading to improper acts; the passions which ought to

* Isaiah, xli. 18. † II Cor. iv. 17.

be in subjection assail us with increased force, and are nourished by vain imaginations: thus evil thoughts are often succeeded by evil acts, such as perhaps we might have started from with horror at the first suggestion, and which will be inevitably followed by confusion and remorse. By suffering any improper ideas to dwell on our minds, they gain strength, their turpitude lessens in our view, and they gradually acquire such an ascendancy over us, that when temptations are presented to us, we are in great danger of falling in with them, instead of struggling to resist them. When we consider the corruption of our nature, and our proneness to evil, there is little room to trust in our own strength, or place much confidence in ourselves: we are at best, but weak, frail creatures, and with all humility should apply for help and strength to Him who is willing to impart it according to our need, adopting the language of that prayer taught us by our Lord and Saviour, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Preserve us, we beseech thee, in a state of watchfulness and prayer, guard us from all the snares that surround us, and so purify our souls, that we may find acceptance of thee, O Lord.

1814.

7th, 1st M°.—O Lord, I beseech thee, have mercy upon me. Pardon my iniquities, and blot out my transgressions.

This is the language of the truly penitent soul, when humbled under a sense of its various sins and infirmities; the language that seems almost spontaneously to arise in our minds, when we consider the holiness that is required of us, to gain an admittance into that state, where nothing that is impure can ever enter. When we look back with regret, and forward with dismay, we are sometimes ready to adopt the language of Nehemiah, when he considered the sins of the people, and thought upon the devastations of Jerusalem, "O Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God."* But let us rather look towards the covenant of love, than contemplate the Almighty in all his terrors; rather look towards him as a Father, willing to receive his repentant children, than as an inexorable Judge.

The consideration of our own failings leads us to compassionate more than censure the failings of others. We know how often we

* Neh. i. 5.

have fallen into temptation, but we know not how much stronger may have been the temptations of others, nor how much lower we might have fallen, had not the mercy of God prevented us. We can seldom review ourselves without seeing much more cause for humiliation than for any self-exaltation. Under these impressions, we joyfully receive the glad tidings of the Gospel, that a Saviour and Redeemer is born unto us, whose invitation to sinful man is to repent and believe; to come to him in faith, assured that upon our sincere repentance, our sins shall be blotted out. That He who came to be a sacrifice for sin, and to finish transgression, will, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, sanctify our hearts; and as we submit to his power, so cleanse us from all impurity, as that through him, we may find acceptance with the Father.

1*st*, 2*d* M°.—Persons well informed, of the best abilities, and with the most serious intentions, entertain such different apprehensions respecting the mysterious parts of the Gospel, that it seems sometimes difficult to know what to decide, or where to fix our wavering faith. Why we are involved in so much obscurity with regard to those things

that seem of so much importance, and which excite our earnest solicitude, is inexplicable to us; for finite capacities cannot fathom infinite Wisdom, nor the things formed comprehend the plans of Him who formed them. Perhaps the darkness that envelops us may be designed as an exercise of faith. Being assured that infinite Wisdom is accompanied by infinite Goodness, we may rely with entire confidence on our Divine Protector, trusting that however dark may be the path through which we are to walk, if we do but endeavour to keep close to our Guide, we shall arrive at a happy termination. If he hold but a glimmering light, we shall do well to follow it, though we may be able to see little of the path through which we are passing, or of the surrounding objects. Our Saviour said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me that ye might have life."* Their minds were so filled with the ideas of worldly prosperity and glory, that they did not understand those prophecies that pointed out the humiliation and sufferings of the Saviour of mankind.

If we search the Scriptures to find the way

* John, v. 39.

to eternal life, let us not turn away sorrowful, because we dislike the terms. Our Saviour's public discourses, which were addressed to the multitude, were generally plain and simple, and easy to be understood. Though there were some deviations from this rule, yet any mysterious parts were chiefly directed to his disciples, or in private conversations, where we may suppose the parties were better able to comprehend him. To the multitude he gave plain rules of conduct, and evinced his power and authority by working miracles. If any man doubted of his doctrine, he gave him a clue to ascertain its truth. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."* Let us, with the docility of little children who are obedient to their parents, follow this rule, and endeavour, in true simplicity of heart, to do the will of our heavenly Father, as far as it is revealed to us. In this frame of mind, I believe we shall become more and more enlightened: Divine knowledge will be unfolded to our view, and our path will be like that of the just, which "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."†

* John, vii. 17. † Prov. iv. 18.

3d, 4th M°.—Have mercy upon us, we beseech thee, O Lord. Thou hast formed us, and brought us into being. So enlighten our understandings, we pray thee, that we may clearly discern the path wherein thou wouldest have us walk; and, however ignorant we may be respecting other things, suffer us not to be ignorant of that which appertains to our salvation. All the blessings we enjoy proceed from thy bounty: and as faith is thy gift, O Lord, grant us such a portion of it, that we may at all times rely on thee. And as our Saviour has declared, that no man can come to him, except the Father draw him; so influence us by thy grace, that we may come to Him, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life; that, being enlightened and guided by the operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we may be safely conducted through all our doubts and difficulties, and at last be received into those mansions of bliss, prepared for all those who follow on to know Thee the Lord, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

29th, 4th M°.—"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider."*

* Eccles. vii. 14.

We thank thee, O Heavenly Father, for all the blessings of life. And we believe that the incense of a grateful heart will be accepted of thee. Suffer not, we beseech thee, our affections to be too much entangled with the perishable things of this life, but so temper adversity with prosperity, that we may not forget the end of our existence, but be prepared for a mansion with thee hereafter. We entreat thee, so impress our minds with a sense of thy love and mercy towards us, that we may never repine at any of thy dispensations, nor doubt of their being all intended for our good. And under the influence of living faith, enable us to offer up praise and thanksgivings to thee, for all thy favours; most of all, for the means of salvation through Jesus Christ; by whom we hope to receive the remission of our sins, and be finally accepted of thee.

3d, 7th M°.—Meeting meditation. We are come here as a public acknowledgment that God is to be worshipped; likewise with the hope of witnessing the prediction of our Saviour verified, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:"* that thus, feeling some

* Matt. xviii. 20.

influence of the holy spirit on our minds, we may be enabled to offer an acceptable sacrifice, and worship the Father in spirit and in truth. But as the human mind seems incapable of spiritual adoration for any long continuance, it may be likewise profitable, when the time is past in silence, to take some retrospective view of our own conduct, and consider whether we are making any advances in that straight and narrow way, that leadeth to life eternal. There are few characters so perfect, but that there are some outward blemishes attached to them, some frailties and infirmities, that most easily beset them. And as every heart knoweth its own bitterness, so may every heart know its own sins and weaknesses, by bringing all to be tried by that unerring light, which discovers every thing that is secret, and sheweth unto man what his thoughts are.

21*st*, 8*th* *M*°.—I believe I am rather apt to look at the gloomy side of things, and to be depressed by fear, more than encouraged by hope. From every thing that requires exertion or energy I am apt to shrink, and, like the slothful man, "think there is a lion in the way." I believe increasing deafness sometimes contributes to depress my spirits,

and make me sink into supineness: yet, whenever I look back over my life, I may thankfully acknowledge that I have been supported through all its vicissitudes; comforted in the hours of anxiety, and strengthened in the hours of trial: and I trust that I can now say, in a degree of faith, that I feel a willingness to submit to the refining hand, in whatever shape it may be manifested; so that it may but purify my soul, and fit it for a heavenly mansion.

24th, 9th M°.—"Behold, I am vile."* This was the self-abasing language of one who had endeavoured to walk in the fear of the Lord, and to fulfil all righteousness. Of one, respecting whom the Almighty bore this testimony, that he was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil."† Yet, when the infinite power and majesty of the Supreme Being were more fully displayed before his eyes, his declaration was, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."‡ If these were the feelings of a man who had walked in integrity before God, what must be those of many of us poor

* Job, xl. 4. † Ibid. i. 8. ‡ Ibid. xlii. 5, 6.

creatures, who cannot look back with the confidence of holy Job, that we have conscientiously endeavoured to discharge all the various duties of life, but have to lament how often we have failed, and fallen short of our duty both to God and man.

In this state of deep humiliation, when our sins and transgressions rise up in judgment against us, a ray of hope beams upon the soul, from the consideration of the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord. He has declared that those who come unto him, he "will in no wise cast out;" and that, if we sincerely repent of our sins, we shall be forgiven. This is our source of consolation, when we consider how frail we are, and how impure we must appear before Him, who chargeth "his angels with folly," and "the heavens are not clean in his sight."* But when humbled and depressed in spirit, does not a query sometimes arise, Am I a true penitent? I believe the best way to judge of the sincerity of our repentance for past faults, is to examine our hearts, and consider whether we *now* endeavour devotedly to follow the leadings of our great Lord and Master, praying that he would cleanse us from all sin, and grant us strength to resist

* Job, xv. 15.

temptation. Then may we press forward, supported by faith and hope, trusting that, through the operation of his power on our minds, we shall be redeemed from all evil, and gain an admittance into the kingdom of everlasting rest and peace.

It is the experience of many of us, that weakness belongeth to us, but that "our sufficiency is of God." The Apostle Paul endeavours to enforce the doctrine. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."* It is the operation of this grace in our hearts that can alone redeem us from evil, and enable us, as we come under its guidance, to fulfil all righteousness.

31*st*, 10*th* *M°*.—Oh how my soul at times longs for a state of rest! Rest from continual watching; from struggling with the sins and infirmities of a corrupt nature. How can this state of rest and peace be obtained? By coming to Jesus Christ; to Him whose declaration is, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life;"† "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son," that all men "through him might be saved."‡ My hope and trust are in the mercy and goodness of

* Eph. ii. 8. † John, xiv. 6. ‡ Ibid. iii. 16, 17.

God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. I wish to avail myself of this mercy: to come to Christ as my Mediator and Redeemer: the means appointed by the Father to bring us from death unto life, and to gain for us an entrance into his heavenly Kingdom. But the process of redeeming love is a subject too exalted for the comprehension of our faculties. I pray for a right faith: that Faith which is the gift of God; and to be drawn by the heavenly Father, without which our Saviour declares no man can come unto him. I desire to come unto him in the simplicity of a little child sensible of its own ignorance, and wishing to be taught. I have no preconceived opinions to be zealous for, no wish to square any thing to my own judgment; but as far as I know myself, am simply desirous that my mind may be so far enlightened that I may see the right path, and be enabled to walk therein. My anxious wish is to believe what I ought to believe, and to practise what I ought to practise; sometimes accompanied with an earnest solicitude that no want of faith may prevent my application for help; crying out, with the father of the child recorded in the Gospel, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." If there remain any weakness of faith that would frustrate

thy kindness, strengthen it, I beseech thee, and clear away all doubts. I believe that thou art the Christ, the sent of the Father, to take away the sins of the world, and restore fallen man to Divine favour. I long to feel thy sanctifying power operating on my mind, to cleanse it from all impurities, and fit it for a heavenly mansion.

However unable we may be to comprehend the mystery of our redemption, we need not fear that such ignorance will preclude us from the benefit of it; for the sincere desire to walk according to the light afforded us, with the disposition to receive farther instructions that may be opened to our minds, will, no doubt, find acceptance with the Father of mercies.

6th, 11*th M°*.—I feel the necessity of the renewal of that baptism which purifies the soul, and fits it for a habitation in the heavens. Under this abasement of self, hope still survives, and encourages us to trust in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who came to redeem us from all evil, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Thus brought into the valley of humility, I hope and believe that the discipline of life has been beneficial

to my soul: it has been good for me to be afflicted, and brought into a state of abasement. I had too high a spirit, too much confidence in myself; perhaps likewise, a too great desire after self-approbation, as well as too strong a wish to gain the applause of men; both useful in moderation, but taking their rise in a species of pride, and pernicious when carried to excess.

1815.

1*st M°.*—[*Extract from letter.*]—To keep children in the proper state of obedience, without having them stand in too much awe, is sometimes difficult. I have always wished that they should be afraid of doing wrong, but not afraid of me. I would encourage them to lay open their little hearts, and speak their thoughts freely; considering that by doing so, I have the best means of correcting their ideas, and rectifying whatever may be amiss. I am, from judgment, no great disciplinarian; if I err, I had rather it should be on the lenient side. Fear and force will, no doubt, govern children while little, but having a strong hold on their affections will have most influence over them in their progress through life. Obedience I do consider

as an indispensable thing in education; but perhaps it would be imprudent to call it forth too frequently on trivial occasions.

It may be said, that good principles are what we must chiefly depend upon for their conduct in future life; they are, no doubt, essential, and will have their effect. But respecting near connexions, duty, unaided by affection, is but a cold motive: where they go hand in hand, they strengthen each other; but where duty and inclination draw different ways, it frequently occasions a great struggle. Besides, good principles make a much stronger impression when inculcated with an affectionate familiarity, than when delivered in a dry lecture.

To exalt one child with the view of either lowering or stimulating another, I am convinced, as far as my judgment and observation extend, has a pernicious effect upon both. Most children will feel some sparks of envy kindled at frequently hearing another praised in comparison with themselves; this, where once given way to, is a tormenting, and generally increasing passion, and prevents that love and harmony which should subsist in families; and which, where it prevails, leads them to rejoice in the happiness and good conduct of each other.

16*th*, 4*th M°*.—"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."* Here seems advice for all the different states of mind that we may feel in our course through life. "Is any man afflicted? let him pray." This precept seems to accord with the general feelings of mankind, or at least, with all the serious or reflecting part. It is natural, in a state of sorrow, to turn our minds towards Him who can alone help us, to pray to Him who has all power, for the mitigation of our sorrows, or for support and consolation under them. We know that He who has wounded can alone heal, and we feel our minds relieved, as we are enabled to approach him in faith. Humbled and depressed in spirit, we are led to seek comfort from religious considerations, and in the ebullitions of grief, lift up our souls to God, though we may not have been much used to it in any other state.

"Is any merry? let him sing psalms." Here is pointed out to us the disposition we ought to cultivate when we are in a state of happiness and worldly prosperity. Thankfulness and gratitude of heart to Him who is the bestower of every blessing we can enjoy either here or hereafter. But this precept

* James, v. 13.

is not, I think, so often followed. The exuberance of spirits which is sometimes felt to arise from present enjoyments, is too apt to overflow in various channels, and the Power by whom our blessings are conferred, is but little thought of. This negligence has a tendency to bring us again under discipline; and convincing us that this world is not a state designed for permanent felicity, to make us turn our thoughts to a serious preparation for a better.

Be temperate in all things, whether in joy or in sorrow; looking to Him who rules over all; praying to him in the hour of affliction, and not sorrowing as those without hope, nor yet elevated in the seasons of joy and prosperity; but with grateful hearts celebrating His praises, who gives and takes away at his pleasure, according as his wisdom sees best for his creatures.

20th, 7th M°.—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity."* Under any debility of body, or depression of spirits, how naturally are we led to contemplate the happiness of such a state. To trust that we are the objects of this mercy, that our pardon is

* Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

granted, and that we shall find acceptance with the Father of spirits, affords the most consoling hope that the mind of man can entertain. And if our hearts are sincere and upright, why should we be disquieted with doubts and apprehensions? Why should we give way to desponding thoughts, instead of confiding in the goodness and mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, who has declared, that upon true repentance we shall be forgiven, if we come unto him in faith. But a query arises, Do I truly and sincerely repent? and have I this right faith? When we are deeply interested about our eternal welfare, it is a subject of too much importance to be trifled with, and we do right in endeavouring to examine every thing closely; but the Scriptures hold forth the language of encouragement too strongly to suffer us to despond; and in both the Old and New Testament the mercy of God to penitent sinners is frequently declared. Faith works by love to the purifying of the soul; and if we submit to this operative principle, and are desirous to be more and more governed by it, and abide under its influence, there is no doubt that we shall make some progress heavenward, and evince, by the fruits we bring forth, that our repentance is sincere.

15*th*, 11*th* M°.—Most holy Lord God, I approach the presence of thy Divine Majesty with fear and trembling. I beseech thee, hold out the sceptre of thy love, that I may not be utterly cast down, but draw nearer and nearer to thee, who hast declared thyself to be a God of mercy and loving kindness. Day after day, and year after year, I have struggled to maintain a warfare with the corruptions of human nature; and though I have often been vanquished and fallen, yet I trust, through thy strength and renewed help, I have been again raised up; for which I desire to offer unto thee thanksgiving and praise.

I humbly hope that thou, who seest the inmost recesses of our souls, seest that I have desired to love and serve thee as I ought. I desire to feel gratitude for all thy preservations, in both spiritual and temporal things. Thou hast saved me when I was careless and negligent, and held me back when I was ready to be rebellious. At all times and in all seasons, thou hast been my stay and support. Thou hast, whenever I have sought unto thee, stretched out a hand of help; and thou hast encouraged me with a ray of hope, that, through redeeming love, thou wilt

pardon my transgressions, and receive my weary soul into a mansion of eternal rest.

4th, *12th M°*.—Devotion arises from the overshadowings of Divine love on the soul, when our hearts are raised to the Fountain of all good; and when in contemplating his wisdom, power and goodness, we prostrate ourselves before him in adoration and praise. This seems to be the highest state of devotion of which our nature is capable: we are conscious of our own nothingness, and the excellency of his Majesty, and, under the sacred influence of his power, worship Him in spirit and in truth.

But true devotion stretches much farther, and has a more extensive influence: it must be brought into all our conduct, and regulate all the concerns of this life. True devotion implies the desire to be conformable to the Divine will in all things; a devotedness of mind to do, or to be, whatever His wisdom may appoint. When we are endeavouring to arrive at this state, it makes us quick-sighted, to discern all the intimations of the Spirit of Truth in our minds, and prompt to obey all its dictates. Devotion does not lead to a seclusion from the world, but to fulfil the various duties allotted us in it. Times

of retirement are no doubt necessary. We must acquaint ourselves with God, and meditate in his law; and it will be well for us to avail ourselves of such reading, and other helps, as may draw us to a nearer acquaintance and more intimate union with him. But let us remember, that though we have the example of our Saviour for retirement and prayer, yet it is likewise recorded of him, that he "went about doing good."

Devotion can never be an excuse for the neglect of any of our duties; but if it have a proper influence over our minds, will prove a stimulus to the more diligent performance of them. The fulfilling of one duty will not serve as a discharge from another. Let us not scrupulously tithe the mint, and the anise, and the cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law.

1816.

14th, 3d M°.—I have several times read Law's Serious Call, and his Christian Perfection, and I think, always with some benefit. Though there appears in some parts a tincture of superstition, and many of his rules are incompatible with the common concerns of the world, and adapted only to a monastic

life, yet, in others, there is such strong reasoning, and so much of the genuine spirit of Christianity, that it can scarcely fail of raising some heavenly desires, some breathings of soul after that state of holiness and conformity to the Gospel dispensation, which, though it may have claimed our approbation, we have only beheld as at a distance, and not brought home to our own conduct, as a line of measurement. We are so surrounded with the things of this world, and our feelings in many instances are so deeply interested in it, that we frequently stand in need of a stimulus to arouse and excite us to a proper sense of duty, and of the situation in which we stand, relative to another world. Whatever helps are offered to us, to prepare ourselves for this more durable and important state, we shall do well to avail ourselves of, and not let the spirit of the world so govern our tempers and actions, as to draw us from that holy guidance which will enable us to overcome the world, and redeem us from evil.

10*th*, 6*th* M°.—In looking over some letters between John Locke and his friends, I find William Molyneux objects strongly to the rule he lays down, "never to suffer a child

to have what he craves, or so much as speaks for," and makes some pertinent remarks on the subject. He says, it is denying a liberty between a child and his parents, which is granted between man and his Creator. "And as between the creature and Creator, all manner of repining upon denial or disappointment is forbidden, so, in the case of children, all frowardness or discontent upon a refusal, is severely to be reprimanded."

This part of Locke's system I mentioned some objections to, page 340, and therefore felt pleased that others agreed with me in opinion. In the answer to Molyneux's letter, Locke says, he thinks he has been rather misunderstood; but still urges the point, that prevention is better than cure; that children should be careful not to ask any thing of their parents, but what they think will be approved: for that a reprimand upon their ill-bearing a refusal, comes too late. This seems to imply, that children have more penetration and judgment than we should give them credit for; and though W. M. expresses himself to be satisfied, the objections, I think, stand much upon the same ground as before.

16*th*, 6*th M°*.—Different motives may in-

duce various individuals of our Society to quit it. Perhaps the most general one is, that the way is too strait and narrow to suit their inclinations, and that they do not much trouble themselves to examine farther. I think there are others who feel some serious impressions, some desires to prepare for a heavenly mansion, who yet perhaps entertain the opinion, that there is more strictness amongst us than is necessary. They want to be religious without so much of humiliation and the cross, and hope to satisfy their minds with some forms of religious worship, which they find their own powers will enable them to practise, and upon which they can look back with self-complacency. And I think there are likewise some who, with devout and religious feelings, are led to believe that a conformity to some outward ceremonies is necessary, in order to become members of Christ's kingdom. These sentiments have perhaps gained additional force, from the comparison of their own spiritual experiences with the description of those of others. They are in haste to participate in a spiritual supper; and if they meet with those who invite them to partake of the elementary bread and wine, distributed at what is called the communion table, and who ex-

press their own satisfaction in so doing, they are flattered with the hope, that they may there, in the breaking of bread, find Him whom their souls desire. And if the practice of such forms be accompanied with faith; if the spiritual senses are refreshed, and the fruit produced is holy, I should hardly dare to endeavour to shake the faith of such, in the use of them, however unimportant they might appear to me; I should rather consider them like the meat offered to idols, which either eaten of, or abstained from in faith, would meet with acceptance. I doubt whether some religious minds may not let in a degree of despondency, from comparing their own feelings with those described by others. They hear them speak of spiritual enjoyments and communications, which upon close examination they cannot appropriate to themselves; therefore fears and doubts intrude, that lead them to think they are not in the right way. But if with sincerity of heart they endeavour to walk before God in humility and fear, desiring to love him above all, and to fulfil all the duties he requires of them, they may rest assured that they are the objects of Divine regard, and that he will dispense to them that portion of spiritual food, which is pro-

fitable for them. I believe there is a great difference in the description of spiritual feeling. Some persons would perhaps only say that their minds were in a state of comfortable, solemn silence, when others would venture to put a higher stamp upon it, and say, that they sat under the overshadowing wing of Divine love. The same difference would most likely occur in many other things, and probably arises (in part at least) from natural warmth of feeling and temper. But these feelings are not the test by which we are to be tried. The language of our blessed Lord is, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" if our conduct evince this love, we are the disciples of Christ, and need not doubt that we shall be owned by him hereafter.

To the class of the first description, it would be well to recommend serious inquiry; to admonish them to contemplate the importance of the subject, whether there be not something to be thought of, and something to be done, in order to a preparation for that state in which we are to be finally placed hereafter; whether a life of dissipation and negligence will make us fit subjects for the kingdom of Heaven.

If the second class were to read the Scriptures attentively, and consider the holiness

of life and conversation there enjoined, and the purity of heart necessary to gain an entrance into Christ's kingdom, they would see that the cross, and that holy discipline which it enjoins, must be submitted to, in order to salvation; neither can any outward forms be substituted in its room, or serve as an equivalent. Under the dispensation of the law, as well as under that of the Gospel, forms and ceremonies would avail nothing without the devotion of the heart. God, by the mouth of his prophets, expresses his abhorrence of their sacrifices and vain oblations, when their iniquities had separated them from him. And our Saviour declares, that it is not one or the other place that makes worship acceptable, but that "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."*

The third class seem to me, after "having begun in the spirit," to seek to be "made perfect in the flesh."† They have felt some spiritual desires raised, some hunger and thirst after the bread and water of life; and I trust, if they had abode in simplicity and patience, without seeking high things for themselves, they would in due time have been replenished therewith. If they think that

* John, iv. 23. † Gal. iii. 3.

they have found a readier way of attaining them through ordinances, let them reflect that the ordinances can be but the means, not the end. Let them beware of mistaking a warmth of imagination for the fervours of piety, or of considering any exalted feelings, or the practice of any ceremonial observances, as a proof of their religious advancement. Rather let them examine themselves by a different touchstone; see whether their love to God and man increases; whether they are in that state of humility to which a blessing is annexed, and whether they abound in righteousness and good works.

30th, 6th M°.—In looking over Owen's History of the Bible Society, I have found much to interest and amuse; the sums collected, and the number of Bibles distributed, appear quite wonderful. Those who believe that the Scriptures are the revelation of the will of God, and profitable to make us wise unto salvation, would be likely to be zealous in spreading those Divine truths; but such an ardour in the cause amongst the various ranks and classes of society which are united together in the same object, would have seemed beyond conception.

The Apostle Paul, after describing the

excellency of faith, and believing in Christ, says, " So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,"* having previously inquired, " How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?"† To circulate the Scriptures appears the most likely means of disseminating the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ; and when we consider that *there* only are life and immortality clearly revealed to us, and that the rules of life there laid down have the greatest tendency to promote our happiness both here and hereafter, it seems almost a thing of course, for every well-wisher of mankind to join in the endeavour to promulgate them, as far as his ability extends.

This is opposed by some, from the supposition that the Scriptures want a comment or explanation to make them understood. That much obscurity hangs about some parts must be conceded. But who are those that can unravel the difficulties, and give a clear explanation? I should think not the wise and the learned much better than the illiterate, if we may form a conclusion from their differences amongst themselves, and their bitter invectives against each other; re-

* Rom. x. 17. † Ibid. x. 14.

maining, after all, fully persuaded that their own opinions are the right.

All Christian sects profess to draw their sentiments and doctrines from the same source, though they arrive at different conclusions. Perhaps the subjects treated of in some parts cannot be brought down to a level with our capacities, while the rules and instructions by which we are to form our lives, may be easily understood. Whilst I was reading of the many who were joining in the distribution of sacred Truth, the reflection crossed me, how little some of them, probably, were acquainted with those writings. Others, perhaps, who know a little more of them, are not much disposed individually to a conformity with their rules, and are thus pulling down with one hand, while they are building with the other; their example not coinciding with the gift they confer. They will give money to distribute a Bible, and at the same time they will give money to be entertained and amused with those pastimes which are in opposition to it, and which could not be performed by persons who were endeavouring to make the doctrines of Christ the rule of their conduct, and to work out their soul's salvation. Were an actress to read the Scriptures, and her

mind become imbued with a sense of religion, I think she must see the necessity of renouncing her present mode of life, from a conviction that it could not possibly accord with that purity of heart, life and conversation, so strongly enforced in Holy writ, where we are told, swearing, jesting, and even every idle word, must be given an account of in the day of judgment. As it is said, that they who "turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever;"* some may think, that by joining in a good work, they shall come in for a share of this benefit, and commute for the indulgence of their own transgressions. Vain imagination! There may be others who are led to think more seriously on the subject than they have ever done before, and thus find their own advantage in it.

However, it does not come within the business of the Bible Society to investigate the various feelings of those who support it: that so glorious a cause may be supported is their object, and I should be induced to believe that the motives generally were good, however mixed with human frailties and inconsistencies.

* Dan. xii. 3.

17*th*, 10*th* *M°*.—I apprehend it is not an uncommon case for people, instead of endeavouring to make their life and conduct conformable to their creed, to endeavour to find out a creed conformable with their disposition and conduct. They in many instances quit those societies in which they have been brought up, not because they think they can live more soberly and righteously in any other, but because they can, with less feeling of restraint, indulge themselves in the pride and vanities of life. In some cases perhaps, they may even take upon themselves the baptismal vow, promising to "renounce the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world," and intending at the same time to give themselves up to the more free enjoyment of the pomps and vanities of this world, than they had done heretofore.

If a man make any change in his principles or practice that produces amendment in his life; if he become more holy, just and good than formerly, more conformed to the example and precepts of Christ; whatever his change may have been *from* or *to*, we must give him credit for the sincerity of his religious principles; but if none of these fruits be produced, whatever may be his professions,

we shall be apt to conclude that he is endeavouring to deceive other people, and perhaps himself.

We read in the Scriptures of various washings of the Jews; of John's baptism, and of the Disciples of our Saviour baptizing: but where we shall find any thing that could give rise to the forms established either amongst Roman Catholics or Protestants, I know not. The considering water as made holy by saying a few words over it, sprinkling with it, and marking a cross on the forehead, with other established ceremonies, I should suppose to be a much later institution than the times of the primitive Christians.

22d, 12*th M°*.—We raise our thoughts to thee, O Lord, desiring that our lips may show forth thy praise. All the blessings we receive are from thy bountiful hand; and thou alone canst relieve all our wants. Oh may thy mercy and compassion never fail, but grant that we may continually be the objects of thy regard! We deplore our many transgressions, and the various defilements of our corrupt nature. But we have nothing to offer unto thee as an atonement; no lamb without blemish to bring for a burnt-offering; no goat to offer in sacrifice for our sins, like

the Israelites of old. But in deep humility we approach thee, in a degree of faith, that through thy mercy in Jesus Christ, who gave himself to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, we shall experience our repentance to be availing, and that through him we shall find redemption and salvation. Grant us, we pray thee, O Lord, an increase of faith; and so influence our hearts that we may grow in love to thee, and our obedience become more and more perfect: that assisted by thy holy Spirit, we may be conformed to the example and precepts of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, and at the conclusion of time be acknowledged as his disciples, and receive the welcome sentence of, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

24*th*, 12*th* *M°*.—I think in the Scriptures, both of the old and new Testament, the characteristic most recommended respecting women, is industry, keeping at home, and managing their own families and households well. In Proverbs, speaking of a virtuous woman, and enumerating her various good qualities, it is said, "She worketh willingly

* Matt. xxv. 34.

with her hands."—"With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard"—"She looks well to her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness."* The Apostle Paul strongly enforces the advice to women to be keepers at home, not wandering from house to house, being tattlers and busybodies. "The aged women" should be "in behaviour as becometh holiness." "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home."†

I doubt in the present day whether this advice is sufficiently regarded. I think the women, in many instances, seem rather encroaching upon those employments and public interferences which are more peculiarly the province of men; and this endangers their forgetting or neglecting those private duties which come more immediately under their care; and the right fulfilling of which has an important influence over mankind in all ranks of life. I do not mean to infer that women are never called to the performance of any public duties. Some instances of this occur in Holy writ: and some stations in life may require the exercise of both the public and private duties, as far as it can be accom-

* Prov. xxxi. 13, &c. † Titus, ii. 3, 4, 5.

plished. But as the public character is not that which is suitable or desirable to be generally sustained, I think it would be well not to set it up too high, or bestow on it any particular commendations which may excite the imitation or emulation of others.

Where some duties must be neglected to fulfil others, it requires great caution how we step forward. And as the human mind, even when it takes a religious bias, is prone to endeavour to do something that may appear great, and that it may look back upon with self-complacency, we should be careful not to propose any object of excitement that may in the general conduct of life be productive of prejudicial consequences.

1817.

8th, 2d M°.—"SURELY, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."* This language must proceed from strong faith and confidence in God. No doubt from experience of the past, the Psalmist is led to anticipate the future: and from exalted feelings of the happiness of his present situation, encompassed with the blessings and care of the Almighty Shepherd,

* Psalm xxiii. 6.

so that his "cup runneth over," he breaks out in the rapturous exclamation, "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."*

May not some of us also acknowledge that mercy and goodness have followed us all the days of our lives? that however depressed and afflicted, we have not been forsaken: that in all our trials and probations, Divine mercy has been extended towards us; that His "rod and his staff have comforted us," and that we have felt his assisting power to lead us in the paths of righteousness. This should animate us to take courage and not be cast down below hope; trusting that the Almighty Arm is still near to support us, and that if we continue to wrestle, we shall at last receive the blessing.

Yesterday I entered my seventieth year. I believe few can feel themselves on the verge of another world, without experiencing some awful sensations. We know not where, or "what we shall be."† What state of being we shall be in, and what will constitute our happiness, we can form no adequate idea of. Whilst in this state of existence we behold the beauties of the visible world. "The

* Psalm xxiii. 6. † I John, iii. 2.

heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."* But respecting the mode of our future existence we cannot even conjecture. Yet from beholding the wisdom and power manifested in the creation of this material world, may we not form the conclusion that the spiritual world will far more exceed in glory, and place those who are permitted to enter into that Kingdom in a state of happiness beyond what they could either "ask or think?" But when on the brink of eternity, the awful feeling of our situation does not so much arise from the ignorance we are in respecting what *mode* of existence will take place, as from the consideration, that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."† Even fear and trembling are ready to take hold on us, when we remember all our iniquities, and that our most secret thoughts are laid open before our judge. I think it is somewhere said that mercy shall cover the judgment-seat to a hair's breadth. We must trust in the mercy and goodness of God; that he will compassionate his creature man, and not be extreme to mark that which is done amiss.

* Psalm xix. 1, 2. † II Cor. v. 10.

27th, 2d M°.—Sensible of the importance of our present state respecting futurity, what can we do, O Lord, but fly to thee for succour and support? We are poor, weak and ignorant, insufficient for any thing without thy help. I trust the hearts of many of us are open to receive instruction; suffer us not, we beseech thee, to grope in darkness, so as to endanger our utterly falling. We come unto thee, not in our own wisdom and righteousness, but in the simplicity of little children, desiring to be taught; serious and sincere in our inquiry, "What is truth?" and solicitous to walk according to its dictates. Endue us, we beseech thee, O Lord, with such a portion of knowledge as may make us "wise unto salvation;"* that, through the assistance of thy holy Spirit, we may walk forward in the just man's path, which "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."†

We have gone astray like lost sheep, and our sins are multiplied upon us. But we look unto thee for mercy and redemption, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has declared himself to be "the way, the truth and the life."‡ Grant us, if consistent with thy will, such an insight into thy spiritual king-

* II Tim. iii. 15. † Prov. iv. 18. ‡ John, xiv. 6.

dom, as may enable us to walk forward with some clearness; and such an increase of faith, that our belief and practice may be well-pleasing in thy sight. Thus, being guided and enlightened by thee, may we press forward, step by step, till we arrive at "the mark for the prize of our high calling;" and are prepared for a habitation with thee for ever.

27th, 3d M°.—I believe most serious persons, at times, feel that calm tranquillity of mind, from the power that religion has over it, in which they can acknowledge that they experience a degree of happiness, and a portion of that peace, which our Saviour bestowed upon his disciples, and which it is not in the power of the world to give, nor wholly to take away. Adam Clarke says, in his notes on the New Testament, "Every man must know if he is in a state of acceptance with God." Is not this going too far? Many a timid mind may distrust itself; and in this situation, people may give way to doubts and fears, lest they should not be in that safe state which will ensure their salvation, who are nevertheless objects of Divine favour and love. I believe the best of us cannot examine ourselves, without seeing that we err either

in act or thought; that we have not, with all our endeavours, fulfilled the conditions proposed to us, and must at last throw ourselves upon the Divine mercy, in the hope of forgiveness and acceptance. But however well-grounded may be our hope through the mediation of our Saviour and Redeemer, still it is but hope; it does not amount to confidence and assurance; and though there are instances recorded in Scripture of some who had attained to such a state; and there may have been some instances since, where the feeling of certainty has overcome all doubt, yet the examples that can be depended upon are but rare, and unless it were experienced just at the closing period, would probably not tend to promote that humility and watchfulness, so necessary to our progress in the Christian life.

21*st*, 4*th M°*.—"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults."* The Prayer-Book translation is, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults." In a sermon on this text, Paley concludes the "secret faults" to be those of which the Psalmist himself was not aware at the time, or that he did not

* Psalm xix. 12.

see them to be faults at the time. Though I do not recollect that this idea ever struck me before, his arguments on the subject appear to me conclusive: the petition to be cleansed from secret faults, must mean something more than those faults which are only secret from other people. In the New Testament, we read that "that servant which knew his Lord's will," and did not "according to his will," was to "be beaten with many stripes." "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes," was to be beaten with few stripes."* Thus ignorance cannot claim an exemption from punishment, though much less culpable than transgressing against knowledge. Serious reflections on myself convince me, that in the course of my life I have committed many errors, which have not struck me to be such at the time, (or at least, not forcibly so), but which have afterwards, when my mind was more awakened, been subjects for deep compunction. And as we have no certainty that future time may not sit in judgment on the present, as the present does on the past, it raises strong desires to be cleansed from every sin wherein we have offended, as well as earnestness in our prayers for help and

* Luke, xii. 47, 48.

preservation; that our minds may be so enlightened that we may see every thing in its proper colour, and that we may receive that spiritual aid, which will guard us against all secret, as well as presumptuous sins.

10*th*, 5*th* M°.—Yesterday evening, we received ——— in the course of their family visit to our Meeting. They seemed to have a particular insight into the state and varied feelings of my mind, and encouragement and consolation were freely administered.

When the spirits have been depressed, it is reviving to be encouraged with the belief, that we are still the objects of Divine mercy and regard; and our faith afresh invigorated with the hope, that He who has been our morning light, will likewise become our evening song.

30*th*, 5*th* M°.—This morning was the concluding meeting of our women's Yearly Meeting. To how many will it be the concluding meeting in a much more extensive sense of the word! I think, whatever we may have lost, we have certainly gained in humility and meekness of deportment; and as far as I can judge, they more extensively operate than they did in former times.

9th, 11*th M°*.—The decease of the Princess Charlotte, and disappointment in her still-born infant, seem to have produced general regret and lamentation. The prospects of joy and gladness are turned into mourning and heaviness; and what results may follow this loss of an expected heir to the Crown, gives rise to some solicitude. Thus does it please Providence often to baffle our most hopeful expectations in a national as well as individual capacity, to convince frail, erring man of his imbecility, and that a greater than he plans and rules all the kingdoms of the earth. It will be our wisdom to look to Him in all events, having full confidence that as His wisdom is above our wisdom, and his thoughts above our thoughts, so he will order all things for us better than we could for ourselves. Our foresight is short; we can penetrate very little into the future, and can form but a very imperfect judgment respecting the consequences that may follow from any present events. The most promising appearances often fall far short of our sanguine expectations; and dispensations that have appeared gloomy, have opened upon us with increasing brightness. We should endeavour to attain a patient submission to the Divine will in all things, and

so to walk in his holy fear, that we may have a well-grounded hope that his blessing will rest upon us, whatever outward dispensations we may have to encounter.

26*th.*—"All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come."*

This sentiment seems expressive of resignation and acquiescence with the Divine will. And I believe, whenever we are disposed to quit the world, from feeling its disappointments and disquietudes, or from being weary of life, we may conclude that we are not in a right frame of mind, or in that state which is acceptable to God.

Whether it be from the pressure of affliction, or the gradual encroachments of age, that the wish is excited to escape from this state of existence, still we should consider that all things are under better direction than ours, and that we know not what benefit may accrue to ourselves or others from our longer continuance in this vale of tears. And notwithstanding we may sometimes give way to regret or discontent, I doubt after all, whether we should not be like the man in the fable, who called upon Death to release him from his burden, but on his ap-

* Job, xiv. 14.

proach, desired him only to help him on with his load again. The Apostle Paul expressed his desire to depart and to be with Christ, but it was with the willingness to remain and labour for others. Sometimes bodily sufferings are so great, that people desire to be released; but in rightly-disposed minds, the wish is accompanied with prayer to be preserved in patience and submission to the Divine Will. These are cases different from that impatience of spirit on account of smaller evils, which sometimes prompts the wish to escape from life; but we ought willingly to submit to any trial that may be a means of promoting our eternal happiness. Let us fix in our minds, that God is good, and that all the dispensations that he allots us are intended for our benefit; and thus, through faith, patience and resignation, our souls will ascend to him; we shall experience consolation under all the trials we may have to encounter, and be sustained with a well-grounded hope, that all this will work together for good.

1818.

25th, 2d M°.—I HAVE passed my birthday without thinking of it at the time. That

birth-day which brought me to the period that is said to be the "days of a man's life;" a period at which few arrive, in comparison of the multitudes that are swept from this stage of existence earlier in life; yet I might almost say with the Patriarch, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been;"* few compared with eternity, and evil with regard to my sins and transgressions. Yet I thankfully acknowledge that I have been in degree favoured with the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth; and though I have had a continual struggle with the corruptions of nature, and in some degree, to wrestle for a blessing; yet I think a grain of faith has still been my portion, and in merciful condescension, a hand of help has been stretched out to support me. Draw nigh unto me, and I will draw nigh unto you, seems to be the language of the Creator to his creature man. If we do but avail ourselves of this invitation, I think we shall find our faith increase. Though we have been long fed with only milk, our strength will be renewed; we shall be enabled to bear meat; and as we press forward in simplicity of conduct and upright intention, we shall at last become "conquerors through him that loved us."†

* Gen. xlvii. 9. † Rom. viii. 37.

Throughout all the various turnings of my life, I have been used to ponder my latter end, and I think, with sincerity of heart, have desired to be prepared for it. What shall I do? has been frequently the language of my spirit, and I trust the disposition has been felt to walk forward in the clear vision of light. But faith has sometimes been at a low ebb. A cloud has rested on the tabernacle, and I have had long to stand still in the wilderness, until it again became a pillar of light. "O send out thy light and thy truth,"* that they may lead me and guide me. Let not my hope in thee, O Lord, fail, but continue to support me in old age. And when this tenement of clay is dissolved, grant me, I beseech thee, an admittance into thy Heavenly Kingdom.

5th 3d M°.—"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."† When our minds are enveloped in a cloud, and we are surrounded by obscurity and confusion, what advice can we receive more pertinent than to trust in God, and stay our

* Psalm xliii. 3. † Isaiah, l. 10.

minds upon him. Weak as we are, we have no inherent power in ourselves to dispel the darkness; we can only trust in the goodness and mercy of Him who can lead us in the right path, and cause darkness to become light round about us. If we look into the sacred writings, many are the texts we shall find, encouraging us to trust in God, with an annexed promise that it will not be in vain. "Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."* And as spiritual food is as necessary to sustain the soul, as natural food to support the body, no doubt, that if our hearts are upright before God, and depending upon him, we shall be favoured with that portion of each, which is necessary for us. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."† If we trust in the Lord with all our hearts, in full confidence that he is able and willing to guide all those who come unto him in the simplicity of children, if we are desirous to be taught by him to walk in that way which is well-pleasing in his sight, without exalting ourselves, or leaning to our own under-

* Psalm xxxvii. 3. † Prov. iii. 5, 6.

standings, we may rest assured, that however gloomy may be the way we have to travel, He will direct our paths, and grant us the knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation.

With this knowledge, it will be our best wisdom to rest contented, without perplexing ourselves with the difficulties that occur to us in the administration of God's providence over the world; things impossible for our faculties to comprehend or fathom. Let us trust in the full confidence of faith, that every thing is under the care and superintendance of a wise and good Being, who will bring order out of confusion, and ultimately cause all things to work together for good. This faith affords us no plea for sitting down in ease and slothfulness; it should rather stimulate us to endeavour to do all the good we can, believing that in so doing, we are co-operating in the Divine plan, and knowing that our labour will not be in vain. In thus doing, we shall also follow the example of our blessed Saviour, who from the time that his acts are recorded, spent his life in doing good.

6th, 3d M°.—Last night I awoke with head-ache and oppression, when the lan-

guage that seemed to arise in my mind was, "Into thy hands," O Lord, "I commit my spirit."* And I thought, that if I were near the awful brink of eternity, I should have felt strength to utter this ejaculation. I have often fervently prayed that my transgressions might be forgiven, and blotted out from the book of remembrance; that through the mediation of a Saviour and Redeemer, I might obtain pardon for my sins, and become so thoroughly sanctified by the operation of his power on my heart, that I might meet with acceptance with the Father. Oh, saith my soul, that I may always be supported with this grain of faith, which will gain the victory over death, hell and the grave!

22d, 3d M°.—Yesterday morning, M. D. and her daughter E. sat an hour with us, in the course of a family visit to our quarter. Affectionate advice and encouragement were handed forth; may it tend to increase our faith, and stimulate us to press forward in the right path.

23d, 5th M°.—"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."† The mode in

* Psalm xxxi. 5. † Gen. iv. 7.

which this question is asked, implies, If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. This law, expressive of the dealings of the Most High with his creature man, has never been abrogated; and indeed, seems afresh sanctified under the Gospel, in many of our Saviour's discourses to the people. "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink,"* &c. To those who had performed these deeds, the invitation was given, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" whilst to those who had not performed those good acts, the sentence was pronounced, "Depart from me ye cursed." Likewise at the conclusion of the sermon on the Mount—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock,"† and it stood firm against the surrounding tempest; whilst he that did them not, was "likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand," and it was overthrown.

Through the frailty and corruption of our nature, "we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."‡ We have no righteousness of our own to plead; we have all

* Matt. xxv. 35. † Ibid. vii. 25, &c. ‡ Rom. iii. 23.

transgressed, and come under the judgment of condemnation. But here the Divine goodness interposes for our help. Through the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord, we are again put in the way of salvation. By sincere repentance, coming to Christ, believing on him, and obeying his commands, we are promised the pardon of our sins, and acceptance with God. But let us remember his warning, "Without me ye can do nothing."* This state of dependance is not only profitable, but necessary.

Whenever we consider ourselves, how prone we are to evil, and how liable to fall into temptation; so that sometimes, even when we intend good, evil seems present with us, we must be conscious of our imbecility, and the need in which we stand of something superior to our own strength to direct our steps aright. To walk forward in humility and fear, and in reliance upon that Divine help, is our only safe state. By grace we are saved through faith. And as we experience the redeeming power of Christ to be operating on our hearts, we shall find Him to be our strength in weakness, our riches in poverty, and a present Helper in every needful time.

* John, xv. 5.

19*th*, 7*th* M°.—"Could ye not watch with me one hour?"* When assembled for the worship of God, or retired to meditate and wait upon him, does not this language of gentle reproof sometimes assail our minds? We feel how difficult it is to keep them fixed on their proper object, and prevent them from straggling to various other things, and in this state find some comfort from the consideration of the gracious apology that our blessed Saviour mercifully made for his disciples. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Perhaps there is scarcely any thing more difficult than to maintain this watch. We could comply with forms of worship; we could read or pray, or adopt any thing that called for activity of body or mind, better than keep a silent watch. Our faculties are disposed to slumber, and though our Saviour may be withdrawn from us but as at the distance of a stone's cast, drowsiness overpowers us. But though we are sensible of, and regret the weakness of our nature, yet it should not tempt us to give up the struggle. We sometimes toil long and catch nothing; and we may sometimes wait long without being favoured to feel the presence of the Master: but we may rest assured it will not be in vain.

* Matt. xxvi. 40, 41.

He knows how frail we are; he remembers that we are but dust. His eyes are continually over us: he marks all our endeavours, and whilst we strive to do our best, will mercifully assist and strengthen us, not only to watch against every intruder, but also to run the race that is set before us.

15*th*, 10*th* M°.—Without thee, O Lord, thy poor dependant children must be miserable. In all states, and in all situations, the devout soul ascends to thee. In the season of prosperity, it flies to thee on the wings of joy and thanksgiving; in the hours of adversity it flies to thee as the only hope of relief and consolation. Without being enabled to look to thee in every situation, we must be forlorn and comfortless. I sometimes let in a fear that I do not love thee as I ought. But wilt thou not, most Gracious God, accept it as some proof of love, that my soul can find no rest but in depending upon thee? Increase this hunger and thirst after thee, I beseech thee, O Lord. And when contemplating the wonders of thy power, and the mysterious government of thy providence over the children of men, my imagination is sometimes apt to wander into things too hard for me to comprehend; check every thought

that would lead me from a pure faith, and endue me with that knowledge which can alone make wise unto salvation. "Secret things belong unto" thee, O Lord, "but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children."*

We pray unto thee for strength to follow thee in simple obedience to those truths that thou hast been pleased to make known, not doubting that by doing thy will, we shall, according to the words of our Saviour, be more fully instructed in his doctrine; and that such discoveries will be made to us, as will assist us in our progress to that eternal rest, after which our souls so ardently aspire.

31*st*, 10*th* M°.—The present appears to me an era, in which Friends, if they keep to their original integrity of conduct, may do much good in the world. We are no longer the poor, despised people that we used to be: we hold a different rank in society. Those of other persuasions generally feel no repugnance to uniting with us in schemes of public utility, and our sentiments are not without their weight in the scale. How much then does it behove us to watch well over ourselves, that we may not by any improper con-

* Deut. xxix. 29.

duct, lessen our means of usefulness. The more opportunity we have of doing good, the greater will be our responsibility. And perhaps there are many dangers and temptations to which we are now exposed that call for increasing watchfulness, lest we should not support the character of the disciples of Christ. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."* Our Saviour does not pray that they should be "taken out of the world," but that "they should be kept from the evil." Many, even among our Society, have fallen the victims of the love of show and expense. This taste leads people into those risks and extensive concerns which often end in their ruin, and are sometimes attended with shameful delinquencies in moral character.

1*st*, 11*th* M°.—Prosperity in our passage through life often exposes us to more dangers than adversity. It fosters pride and self-complacence; leads us to set a higher value on ourselves than we ought to do, and has a tendency to captivate our minds by the enjoyments of this present world. Adversity enforces humility, and leads us to look forward to another life.

* John, xvii. 14.

When we indulge ourselves in wishing for power or riches, we are but little aware of what we wish for. To covet power for the sake of ruling over others, and making them subservient to our will, we could not justify, even to ourselves. And if we covet it with the idea that it will enable us to do much good, and that we may use it for the benefit of others, experience will, most probably, convince us that we have laboured under much self-deception. If we covet riches that we may spend them in ease and luxury, we shall find it end in disappointment; for it is not in the power of such things to confer real happiness. And if we covet them with the prospect that we shall be more useful to others, and have the capacity to do more good, let us consider the deceitfulness of our own hearts, that they may not be enlarged as our abilities are increased, and that where much is given, much will be required, whether it be of knowledge, power, or the good things of this life.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men;"* is the language of Holy writ: and this moderation should be prevalent in our desires as well as in our conduct. If we do but in good earnest apply the power, the

* Phil. iv. 5.

knowledge, or the riches, of which we are at present possessed, to do the good that we can, we shall perhaps have a more ample supply than we had estimated, and our lives may be productive of much fruit; like the widow's oil in the cruse which appeared to be but a small quantity, we shall find that it will produce a sufficiency for all our wants.

If we are called to any station or situation in life, I do not know that we ought to reject it, merely because responsibility is attached to it; for if we can do good, we should not shrink from labour because it is unpleasant to us, but if duty point the path, set our hands and our hearts cheerfully to the work. There is scarcely any thing in life to which some degree of responsibility is not annexed. If we are blessed with sound limbs, we ought to use them according to their office: if with a good understanding we are bound to cultivate it. If we are possessed of riches, we should use them as good stewards who are to account for them. If we have servants, we are responsible for our care and good treatment of them; and if children, much more so, and likewise to labour for their benefit in various respects. No relationship or situation in life can be exempt from responsibility: and though we may not covet those situations

where it is increased, to endeavour to escape it wholly will be in vain, because, in the nature of things, impossible. To be content wherever we are, or in whatever circumstances we are placed, filling up the measure of our duties as well as we are able, is the only wise and safe plan; the plan which will most promote our happiness in the present life, and give us a well-grounded hope that we shall receive the welcome sentence of "Well done thou good and faithful servant;" "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."*

6th, 11*th M°*.—Some friends who are anxiously solicitous for the welfare of their children, are yet fearful of giving them much religious instruction, lest their minds should be led to form any improper ideas, or acquire a wrong bias. But whilst we endeavour to guard against one extreme, we should be careful not to fall into another; and I think some previous religious knowledge is necessary, before children can learn the benefit to be derived from silent waiting.

When Samuel went to Eli, with the apprehension that he had called him, the instruction that he gave him was, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou

* Matt. xxv. 21.

shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."* Here seems much comprised in a short sentence. Samuel is informed by Eli, who it was that called him, how he was to answer, the readiness he ought to show in attending to whatever might be imparted to him, and his willingness to obey; for all this is implied, in "thy servant heareth."

7th, 12*th M°*.—Thou shalt not "put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God."† These two things seem incompatible with each other. We cannot fear God, and do that which will cause the blind to stumble; for "cursed is he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way."‡ And if we consider the import of these texts, we shall be led to conclude that they extend much farther than the thing specified, and should so operate, as to have a general influence over our conduct. It should be a settled rule, never to lead any body astray, whether bodily or mentally blind. We should never prompt any one to do any thing that we think not right for him to do, either by an affected show of civility to him, or for our own gratification: never propose to any one to do that, which we should perhaps say, be-

* I Sam. iii. 9. † Lev. xix. 14. ‡ Deut. xxvii. 18.

hind his back, he had better not have done; it is a breach of that truth and sincerity of conduct which we ought inviolably to maintain. We are in a higher degree culpable, if we lead those astray who are young and inexperienced, and who are probably looking towards us in some measure for guidance and protection. Job comforts himself with having been "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame." And I believe we shall always look back with satisfaction on those circumstances of our lives, wherein we have helped others to do right, either in their spiritual or temporal concerns.

25*th.*—O Lord, we beseech thee, "Lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."* Sensible of our own insufficiency, we prostrate our souls before thee, earnestly praying for thy help and protection; and not only for thy help and protection, but that thou wouldst open our hearts to receive instruction, and give us strength to follow the counsel which thou art pleased to impart: that thus, knowing thy will, we may be guided by thee in all things. O Lord, we acknowledge our transgressions. We know that all our sins are beheld by thee, and that the in-

* Psalm iv. 6.

most recesses of our hearts are open to thy inspection. We pray for thy forgiveness, through Christ our Mediator and Redeemer, that our repentance may be accepted, and our hearts purified, through the cleansing operation of his spirit. So strengthen us, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we may more and more follow on to "know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;"* that, having our faith reanimated, we may press forward with hope, and, in the conclusion, "rejoice in thy salvation."†

26th.—When I sit down by the fireside, in my own chamber, to take a short repose in the afternoon, the thought often arises whether I am not getting into habits of too much self-indulgence. Threescore and ten years of age may afford some plea for an increase of those indulgences that are within our reach; but I think it requires watchfulness, that they do not extend too far, lest we should begin to think ourselves of most consequence, when we are in reality of the least. Yet many things conspire to promote this self-importance. Our friends and relatives, perhaps perceiving some increasing debilities and infirmities, are careful respecting us;

* John, xvii. 4. † Psalm ix. 14.

they prompt us to take care of ourselves, and withdraw from every thing that may fatigue or trouble us; and I believe we sometimes give way to their apprehensions, lest we should in any respect become burdensome to them.

When I have been sometimes contemplating the happiness of my own situation respecting temporals, and comparing it with that of those of inferior classes, I have felt my heart touched with compassion. But when, on the other hand, I have looked at the situation of those much above me, and considered how unhappy they would think themselves, if reduced to mine, it has led me to the conclusion that there is a more equal distribution of happiness than one might, at a casual glance, imagine: and if it would be grievous for some, in a higher situation, to reconcile themselves to that which I find so comfortable, there is the same foundation to suppose that those of a lower class are equally satisfied with a much smaller portion of worldly goods than falls to my share. If we have food to eat, and clothing to put on, with a house to shelter, and fire to warm us, we shall not be precluded from earthly enjoyments. Few situations are so deplorable, but that, with a contented mind, they will

afford some comforts; and, without it, the highest cannot be happy.

1819.

8th, 1*st M°*.—Four weeks to-day, ——— has been confined with a severe and dangerous illness. Her unvaried kindness to her near connexions has led them to look to her in all seasons of difficulty and affliction, when they have always experienced her readiness to sympathize with and assist them. She was "kindly affectioned," and could not bear the shadow of being at variance with any body. But I am speaking of her in the past tense, and as if she *now* were not. What *will be*, is in the womb of futurity; and we should cultivate the faith, that every thing is under the direction of an All-wise Being, who knows what is good for us, better than we know ourselves.

29th.—Early on fifth-day morning, the 21st, my sister M. departed this life, and was interred at Winchmore Hill on the 28th, after a meeting.

One cannot help feeling regret, that a life so useful should not have been prolonged, besides that which arises from our own par-

ticular attachment. But with regard to her state, we have every consolation; and let us bear in remembrance, that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. And whether in joy or grief, in sickness or in health, in prosperity or adversity, let us reverently bow before Him; and, under the various dispensations of his providence, come unto him with the offering of adoration and praise.

1*st*, 4*th M°*.—Assist me, I beseech thee, O Lord, to cast all my care upon thee in a living faith; in a faith that can rely with confidence on thy mercy and goodness, and, in a firm dependance upon thee, under every dispensation. Thou alone canst supply all our spiritual and temporal wants; and all our hopes centre in thee, as the source of every blessing we can possess. Lead us on, we pray thee, O Lord, in that path which will bring us nearer and nearer to thee; that, when all our struggles through life are past, we may find a place of rest with thee for ever.

27*th*, 6*th M°*.—"Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."* This was the language of Christ to his dis-

* Luke, xxii. 31.

ciples, when near the close of his mission on earth. And the text has often occurred to my mind, accompanied with feelings that have almost tempted me to think whether I was not in the same predicament. When we are in a state of much anxiety respecting temporal things, evil suggestions relative to those which are spiritual, sometimes arise; our minds become perplexed and bewildered amidst the doubts that surround us, and we are almost ready to give way to "an evil heart of unbelief."* We cannot comprehend the mysterious government of Providence over the moral world, and debilitated in mind, we are perhaps more apt to fall from that living faith that can alone support us. But let us recollect the consoling addition made by our Saviour to Peter, after having informed his disciples that Satan had desired to have them, that he might sift them as wheat: "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." We may trust that his mercy is extended to all who have but a grain of faith to come unto him; and though at times it may appear so weak, that we are ready to cry out, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief," yet if we endeavour in simplicity to rely upon him, he will disperse the clouds

* Heb. iii. 12.

that surround us, and grant us a portion of that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation.

28*th*.—It is no new thing for religious minds to be tempted and tried; they lament their desertions and the withdrawing of Divine favour, and frequently feel themselves in a bewildered state. In this situation, we should endeavour to possess our souls in patience, supported with hope; and when more clearness and brighter prospects appear, like the Apostle Paul, when he was met by his Christian brethren, thank God, and take courage.

1*st*, 7*th* *M*°.—In a testimony respecting a deceased friend, above a year ago, it was remarked that she had said, there was iniquity even in our best things, or our best performances. I do not exactly remember the expression, but the sentiment has since often occurred to my mind, with an acknowledgment of its truth. We are poor, weak creatures, and can have nothing to boast of. Even when we endeavour to do our best, it is mixed with much to lament, and we have cause to regret our deficiencies, and feel

humbled under them, rather than to look back with any self-applause.

To go to a place of worship, is so far well; but have we such a command over our thoughts, as to prevent the intrusion of any improper ones while there? or have we watched and struggled against them with all the vigilance we were able? We perhaps do an act of charity; but has it been from proper motives? and has it had nothing of ostentation, self-consequence or importance accompanying it? When we weigh all our actions in the impartial scale of truth, we shall be made sensible how much they fall short, either in thought, word, or deed; and that to us belongs nothing but "confusion of face."

29th, 7th M°.—Happy is it for us, when we feel all our hopes and wishes tempered with resignation to the Divine Will. In riches or in poverty, in joy or in grief, in life or in death, if we put our whole trust in God we shall not be moved. He knows what is most profitable for all his creatures, both for us, and for those about whom we are most anxious; and we may so confide in him, as to rest assured that he will cause all things to work together for good.

24th, 8th M°.—If we steadily and patiently endeavour to pursue the right path, as far as knowledge is imparted to us, and occupy with those talents that are committed to our care, we may comfort ourselves with the hope that the endeavour will be accepted by Him who knows all our weaknesses and infirmities, and the temptations to which our frail nature is liable. Though we are sometimes surrounded with darkness, and our faith seems almost ready to fail, yet let us remember who it was that said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."* When he sees meet, he can dispel the darkness, and cause us to rejoice in his salvation.

14th, 11th M°.—I often struggle for resignation, and a more complete acquiescence with the Divine Will. I can say, with the Apostle Paul, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection;"† but I do not feel capable of exerting the same influence over my mind. I believe this can only be effected by the operation of that Power who can "subdue all things unto himself."‡ He watches over all the workmanship of his hands, and his providence is continually ho-

* II Cor. xii. 9. † I Cor. ix. 27. ‡ Phil. iii. 21.

vering over us for good. His power is the same over the perturbations of the soul, as over the boisterous elements, and he can diffuse a calm over the mind as easily as over the tempestuous ocean. The prayer of faith will ascend to Him: he will pluck our feet out of the miry clay, and set them upon a rock whose foundations are fixed, and will stand firm against the rain, the floods and the wind. I think we shall do well not to perplex ourselves with contemplating the various evils of life, or the mystery of iniquity. Secret things belong unto God, and he only can reveal them according to his good pleasure. Our concern is with those that are revealed; and we may trust that we shall be sufficiently enlightened to pursue the right way. Submission to the Divine Will in all things is our duty, and will prove the source of our greatest happiness; for when our will revolts against the Divine Will, nothing but misery can ensue. However perplexing or depressing may be the trials we have to encounter, still we should endeavour not to let our faith fail; but contemplating the goodness and mercy of God through the whole course of our lives, continue to trust in him; and even "although

the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines,"* yet we should raise our souls to "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation."

1820.

2d, 1st M°.—To those who are advanced to that period of life in which they may expect soon to step out of the world, and leave all its concerns, what relates solely to the individual self cannot be a subject of much importance. Through hope, I endeavour to struggle on; and am at times fully sensible of the happiness of a calm acquiescence with the will of God in all the dispensations of his providence, whether in those obviously great trials that call forth the sympathy of our friends, or in those more trifling ones which are felt chiefly by ourselves.

29th, 1st M°.—That we may not be overwhelmed by the terrors of the Almighty, he is proclaimed to us throughout the Scriptures as a God of mercy and loving kindness; appealing to the warmth of our own affections and declaring it more possible for a woman to forget her sucking child, than for him to

* Hab. iii. 17, 18.

forget his people. To consider him as a God of love is most consoling to the human mind. When we see him only in his majesty and the greatness of his power, we may feel (like the Israelites of old, when they beheld his glory upon Mount Sinai) struck with terror and amazement. But when he is represented to our view as a Father in Heaven, full of beneficence and love, and giving us his blessed Son to redeem us from evil and draw us to himself, it inspires us with confidence, and enables us to overcome slavish fear, and trust in him for our happiness both here and hereafter.

15*th*, 3*d M°*.—To stand in our allotments, and endeavour to fulfil the duties of that station in which we are placed, is always profitable advice; but the human mind is generally prone to seek something great, and those who are well disposed, and with true devotion of heart endeavouring to perform their Heavenly Father's will, are sometimes in danger, if they do not feel themselves called to particular exertions and acts of public dedication, of letting in a fear that their private services are not acceptable. This may lead them from the simple path of duty, to seek for something of more impor-

tance to evince their dedication. But those who have the ten or the five talents are not always called upon to employ them in the same way, though the adequate improvement will be necessary; and if those to whom only one talent is given, should attempt to do great things, and to occupy with it on the same plan as those who have the ten, they would soon get into confusion and not be able to make any improvement at all.

23*d*, 9*th M°*.—Often during my illness have I felt the comfort of attention from near relatives. And I hope I have been truly thankful to Him who has been my Preserver through life, that my mind has been covered with calmness throughout. I know how much I stand in need of mercy, and I have sometimes found my mind overshadowed with clouds. But as the struggle is still maintained to be more redeemed from the corruptions of nature, it seems a proof that Divine goodness is not withdrawn, and that I may hope to have that mercy granted of which I stand in need.

13*th*, 10*th M°*.—"Our Father which art in Heaven!" Though our Lord and Master, thou permittest us to address thee by the

endearing title of Father; thus engaging us to love thee, and to approach thee with filial affection. To trust that as a father pitieth his children when they go astray, so wilt thou pity us who are the workmanship of thy hands, and help us to walk forward in the right path. If in all the terrors of thy Majesty thou shouldst lay thy hand upon us, who could bear its pressure, or stand before thee? But thou art graciously pleased to reveal thyself to us as a God of mercy and loving kindness; willing to accept of our repentance, and receive even the returning prodigal. Thus encouraged, we put up our petition to thee, O Father, for the forgiveness of all our transgressions! humbly beseeching thee to help us to come unto thee in true faith, that we may be instructed and guided like submissive and obedient children; looking unto thee for that assistance, without which we can do nothing, and acknowledging that all power belongeth unto thee!

25th, 12*th M°*.—When we contemplate the various scenes of imbecility of body or mind that we have witnessed, or that surround us, we cannot surely covet old age as a blessing. Nevertheless, if our lives can be of use to others, or profit ourselves in better preparing

us for those regions of peace and purity, which through abundant mercy we hope to enter, we may well endure, not only with resignation but with thankfulness, all the privations to which it subjects us.

1821.

25th, 1st M°.—When thick darkness that might be felt was over the land of Egypt, "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."* What a privilege this was! But it is a still greater privilege to be favoured with spiritual light, that we may see clearly what we have to do, and the way in which we ought to walk. I often long for this spiritual clearness, that I may have a right faith, and be strengthened to walk in conformity with it. But this would be walking by sight rather than faith; a state which we are informed is not to be our portion, while we are struggling with mortality. We may trust in the goodness of God, that he has revealed enough for our salvation, if, with simplicity of heart we endeavour to walk forward in that light which he has afforded: but, if instead of this we endeavour to stretch

* Ex. x. 23.

our reasoning faculties beyond their powers, and penetrate into those things which are sealed mystery, we shall only get more and more perplexed, and perhaps miss that light and that way, in which it is said, "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."*

6th, 2d M°.—When I look back to an early part of my life, and make a comparison between that time and the present, I often feel surprised at the different state of society; particularly respecting those various public institutions, associations, &c., which have of late been formed for the benefit and improvement of mankind. I think the change may in part have arisen from the different influence of the female character in society; their joint exertions with the men, helping forward the great work of meliorating the human race: and where women are the objects, much of the minutiæ is particularly the province of women. Private charity was perhaps as great formerly as it is in the present day, but it was, I think, more confined to the domestic circle.

But it often happens, that as a nation rises

* Isaiah, xxxv. 8.

in one part of its character, it falls in another. I suppose dissipation and extravagance are now as prevalent as ever, and justice and integrity at a lower ebb. Fifty years ago bankruptcy was a rare thing; now it is become so frequent that, except by the persons concerned, it passes almost unnoticed, even though accompanied with great delinquency. What shall we say to these things? Not give up our endeavours to do good where we can, because a great deal of evil still exists, or that many of our exertions prove abortive. When any thing profitable is on the wheel, the adversary of mankind frequently endeavours to stop it, and mar the work. We can only pray to our Heavenly Father to put it into our hearts to do good, and assist us in the prosecution of it; being under the daily conviction that without his help we can do nothing; but that if his blessing attend the work, it will assuredly prosper.

28*th*, 3*d* M°.—I find infirmities increase upon me, and I am often led to think on the similitude there is between childhood and old age. I have not attained to the full assurance of Faith respecting futurity, but I trust hope is prevalent: and when I look back and con-

sider the many preservations I have experienced in the course of my life, it surely calls for reliance on the mercies of God, that he will not forsake me in old age, and that through Christ my Saviour and Redeemer he will grant me pardon for all my transgressions. This has been the soul-sustaining hope in all my conflicts, and I trust will not forsake me at the last.

14*th*, 5*th* *M*°.—On seventh-day morning —— departed this life, having survived her husband nearly four years. I too am hastening to the same period, and whether the intervening time may be long or short, I desire without anxiety to leave to Him who knows better than his creatures what is most conducive to their welfare. About two weeks ago I found a shortness of breath so very troublesome that I consulted T. S. about it. I became better; but at this better I seem to stop, and though my breath is in some degree relieved, I feel much languor and debility. I trust I am supported with a degree of faith that the mercy which has been so often extended to me through life will not forsake me, that He who careth for his creatures will not lay upon me heavier burdens than he will

enable me to bear, and that at last, when the closing scene arrives, I shall be favoured to lay down my head in peace.

18*th*, 6*th* *M°*.—Whether I am waiting for returning illness, or for returning strength, seems often to my mind very doubtful. I believe I had oftener looked forward to a speedy dissolution than to a long previous illness; but whichever may be my allotment, I hope I shall be resigned to it, and while my mind is capable of being raised in supplication, that the prayer for mercy and forgiveness may be put up, and that help afforded which can sustain us through all difficulties.

26*th*, 6*th* *M°*.—Yesterday afternoon we had a very satisfactory visit from A. B. She particularly united with me in some of the thoughts that had occupied my mind during my late illness, and I felt peculiarly gratified in hearing clearly all she said: a thing latterly of very rare occurrence either in public or private religious opportunities. With regard to the body, I think I have been treading a circle; but I hope the mind will be prevented from again slipping into the round.

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." And may He who knows what is best for me enable me to bear the turning of his hand upon me, until all be removed that obstructs an entrance into his kingdom.

THE END.

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Woods, Margaret
Extracts from the journal of the late Margaret Woods, from the 1771 to 1821